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VOL. 5

APRIL-MAY 1954

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A. E. Ross

KENYA UNDER THE IRON HEEL*

SOON after the outbreaks of terrorism in October of last year Mr. Lyttelton on his return from a "fact-finding" tour of Kenya, stated in the House of Commons that "The first thing that emerges and stands out sharply is that Mau Mau is not the child of economic causes as it is often represented to be" but "in effect Mau Mau was the unholy union of dark and ancient superstition with the apparatus of modern gangsterism." This statement set the tenor of nearly all press reports on Kenya and has been the reasoning which has justified every savage act by the British Government against the African people. Dark forces indeed. After the atrocities that were and are being committed with the convenient excuse of eliminating dark forces by Stalin, Hitler and Western guardians of holy law and order, this apostle of light, displaying the utmost contempt for public mentality, expects us to follow the sheep in the House of Commons and swallow this nebulous psychological explanation as the cause for the sudden emergence of Mau Mau.

In order to expose this deception it is necessary at the outset to show the primary economic causes at the heart of African resistance — not to be confused with Mau Mau which is a purely British invention as we will prove later. Further, it will be seen that every brutal aspect of the present emergency is only an increase in scope and tempo of what has existed ever since the whites introduced their system of benevolent trusteeship.

The people of Kenya were initiated in the "civilisatory process" with the development of the Uganda Railway, built, like railways in India, for the purpose of keeping the indigenous population in check. To defray the original cost of the railway and to maintain it as a profitable concern, the country was opened to white settlement in 1902 and, backed by "imperial right", the settlers expropriated the richest farming lands in Africa, the victims being the African people in the region despite constantly reiterated pledges by the Government that "when the interests of the African population and those of the immigrant conflict the former shall prevail". This past history is denied or glossed over when justification for white land robbery is necessary. As that authoritative apologist for settler interests Sir Philip Mitchell, a former Governor of the Colony (now himself a settler) said: "It is an historical fact that the lands we have turned into farms and towns were vacant lands when we came here . . . This land we have made is ours by right — by right of achievement". (From a speech to the Caledonian Society of Kenya in Nairobi, 30th November, 1946, quoted by George Padmore in *Africa: Britain's Third Empire*, Dobson, 1949). A more recent tune on the jingo trumpet is played by Mr. Blundell, Kenya's liberal leader, speaking in the Legislature on the recent

* NOTE: Italics throughout are the author's.

recrudescence of Mau Mau. "The problem is one we have had since 1916. Since we brought British administration to this country, for more than 50 per cent. of that time we have had reluctance by the Kikuyu to accept the benefits of law and order and our way of life, with the prosperity which can stem from it, except on their own terms. This is a challenge by the Kikuyu people — whether actively or passively sustained — to impose their rule on all other people in this country." (*Times* 25/7/53). No doubt this is just reasoning for the settlers whose interests are tied up with the "right of achievement", a "right" achieved through force; but in fact these usurpers have no rights whatever, whether of achievement or otherwise, over African lands, cultivated, vacant or in any other condition which Western jurists might invent. The land belongs to the Africans, the whites must hand back and submit to the majority or get out. This is the only right involved. Nevertheless we will examine the validity of this "historic fact", not to prove the African claims to the land, for their right is a self-evident democratic right which today needs no substantiation, but to expose this historic lie.

According to Jomo Kenyatta the traditional laws governing land tenure were that all the land was privately owned by the head of the family or communally owned by individual family groups, but irrespective of whether the land was privately or communally owned, each member of the family or clan had a right to a piece of land for as long as he or she continued to work it, a system of tenure common to most peasant societies. In each such block of land, areas were allowed to lie fallow to permit expansion of the population as well as the efficient working of the typical African practice of shifting cultivation. Should any land have been specially suitable for grazing, or contained some extraordinary amenity such as a spring, it was by tribal custom used as common land. (See *Facing Mount Kenya* by Jomo Kenyatta, Secker and Warburg, 1938). It will thus be seen that the land was not held communally by the whole tribe, but that, in the words of Miss Dilley (*British Policy in Kenya Colony* by Marjorie Ruth Dilley, Nelson, New York, 1937): "The idea of absolute ownership was unknown; it was neither communal ownership nor freehold; it was tenure based on beneficial occupation." This system was obliterated by a series of ordinances until finally the former owners found themselves no more than tenants-at-will of the Crown by whom they could be dispossessed at will, a juristic trick which enabled the Government to juggle with land as it pleased to suit the requirements of white alienation and at the same time firmly control the African peoples by herding them in special reserves.¹

The process of extinguishing the Africans' right to land was already well under way by 1904. "Between May, 1903, and December, 1904, two hundred and twenty thousand acres were transferred to 342 Europeans. During the same short period, the East African Syndicate was given

¹ The Native Areas Ordinance in Council of 1938 "empowers the Governor to make minor adjustments to the boundaries of the native land units: and under the Ordinance there are rule-making powers for many purposes, including the regulation of matters relating to the tenure of land as between natives in the native lands. It is laid down that in the case of treason or rebellion any land in the native lands held or occupied by a tribe, group, family or individual may be forfeited and revert to His Majesty." *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies*, C. K. Meek, O.U.P., 1949, 2nd ed.

320,000 acres, the Uplands of East Africa Syndicate 350,000 acres, the Grogan Forest Concession 200,000 acres and Lord Delamere 100,000.² Since this time, moreover, the 'alienation' of land from Africans to Europeans was extended to a total of 16,700 square miles." (*Land Hunger in Kenya* by Mbiyu Koinange in collaboration with Achieng Oneko, published Union of Democratic Control). In 1931, under a Labour Government, minor adjustments were made to African lands as a result of the discovery of gold in the Kavirando Reserve. "The Kavirandos were moved off the land, and a new law, granting concessions to the Europeans to come in and exploit the gold, was passed by the Kenya Legislative Council. The Africans were simply deprived of their land without any adequate compensation, . . . In 1937 Kikuyus inhabiting the Trigoni district were treated like the Kavirandos and evicted from their farms. In the following year, the blow fell upon the people of Wakamba Reserve, to the east of Nairobi. Large numbers of their cattle were forcibly rounded up and sold at very low prices to Liebig, a large meat-packing firm, whose representative happened to be conveniently on the spot." (Padmore, *ibid*). Then in 1938 legislation was enacted to implement the recommendations of the Kenya Land Commission (Carter Report) and under the chicanerous Native Land Trust Ordinance, 1938, all native rights in the European Highlands were extinguished. "The Land Commission had established the fact that in the Highlands there were many natives living on European-owned farms, chiefly in the Kiambu and Limuru areas, *who had been in occupation long before the farms had been allotted for European settlement* . . . The Commission had recommended that, although claims of right on the part of these natives should be admitted, it was in the best interests of the Colony as a whole [i.e. the whites.—Author] that these rights should be expunged, and that the natives concerned should be removed to other lands within the extended native areas" (Meek, *ibid*). The following year saw the passing of the Kenya (Highlands) Order in Council which, as an act of "administrative convenience", officially designated the area white man's country. Three months after the passing of this Order "the Wataita people were *forcibly evicted from their land at Taita Hills.*" (Padmore, *ibid*).³ The late Labour Government further concretized the aims of the Atlantic Charter when "Over thirty thousand men, women and

² "Colonel E. S. Grogan, the oldest member of the Kenya Legislative Council, who is 78 and has spent most of his life in Kenya advocated charging 'about 100 of these rascals' with treason and hanging 25 per cent. of them in front of the remainder, who should be sent back to the reserves 'to tell the joyful news to the others . . . If something on these lines is not done quickly to bring this business to a real conclusion then we shall be faced with a problem, for the patience of the people I represent is very nearly exhausted — and not only that, but their endurance is nearly exhausted.'" (*Times* 27/11/52).

³ The real purpose of trusteeship is shown by this vignette from the days when colonial policy could afford to dispense with the moral camouflage of "right". "No doubt on platforms and in reports we declare that we have no intention of depriving natives of their land, but this has never prevented us from taking whatever land we want for Government purposes or from settling on land not actually occupied [that is, not actually being cultivated.—Author.] by natives. Your Lordship has opened this protectorate to white immigration and colonization, and I think it well that in confidential correspondence at least [how little times have changed!—Author] we should face the undoubted issue — viz: that white mates black in very few moves." — Sir Charles Elliot's last despatch to the Foreign Office during his Governorship of the Colony in 1904.

children of the Ol Engruone settlement were served in 1948 with removal orders from their homes. Their cattle and goats were confiscated on the ground that the Natives had disobeyed the order to request their children to go and pick pyrethrum at a European Keringet Estate . . . On the 5th April, 1948, representatives of these people were brought before the magistrate at Nakuru, and African members of the Kiambu Local Native Council gave evidence supporting the fact that the land at Ol Engruone was allotted to them in exchange for the land they had in Kiambu which was alienated to European settlement. Each man was awarded a fine of 120 shillings or two months' imprisonment in default. A good many of these thirty thousand homeless and landless people have not gained steady employment since 1940 when the conflict over their land was started." (Padmore, *ibid.*) The results of this process are summed up by Mbiyu Koinange (in collaboration with Achieng Oneko) in the pamphlet *Land Hunger in Kenya*: "This act of dispossession meant much to us Africans in Kenya. It meant, in brief, the alienation of 16,000 square miles to 2,000 European settlers, and the 'reservation' of 50,000 square miles for 5½ million Africans. The balance of 158,000 square miles of land and water was left 'unallocated'; was left, that is, to the decision of the Government civil servants who are often settlers as well. In this 'unallocated area' neither Africans nor Europeans may own land without an order of alienation.

"But even our 50,000 square miles have been reduced by various proclamations which have 'set aside areas' for trading centres, administrative and police posts or various reserves and wherever African lands are suspected of bearing mineral deposits, such lands are declared to be 'restricted areas'."

This, however, is only the quantitative side of the matter. The qualitative picture is given in a *Times* leader (18/7/52) describing the White Highlands of Kenya as being "like a slice of England dropped in the middle of Africa" [quoting Mr. Griffiths, a former Colonial Secretary]. Nowhere, probably, in that continent is the soil richer or the climate healthier; . . . the soil reserved for African occupation is, however, except in places like the fertile Nyanza province, of poor quality and it has for many years been steadily made poorer by overcrowding and bad methods of cultivation. Some areas such as Machakos, inhabited by the Wakamba tribe, offer some of the worst examples to be seen of this not infrequent state of affairs in Africa." These conditions are further emphasized by Sir Philip Mitchell in *Land and Population in East Africa*, H.M.S.O., 1952. ". . . but in general the numbers of livestock are beyond the existing carrying capacity of the land although at the same time they may be insufficient for the needs of the people for meat, milk and manure. Most of the pastoral areas are heavily and dangerously overstocked . . ." Six years ago an official report on conditions in the Kiambu district of the Kikuyu Reserve said that 40 per cent. of its population was landless and gave warning that some 90,000 persons in Kiambu "might become without means of support within a short time, something which cannot be faced with equanimity." (*Observer*, 26/10/52). "The density of population in the Kavirando Reserve is about 150 to the square mile and 300 to the square mile in the Kikuyu district, rising locally to over 1,000 to the square mile.

Those Africans who are unable to find accommodation within the Reserves live as squatters on European plantations, only 6 per cent. of which is in actual cultivation. The blacks give 180 days free labour to the landlords for the privilege of living on land which formerly belonged to them." (Padmore, *ibid.*) And to what does Sir Philip Mitchell attribute this inhuman state of affairs? To the Government and the settlers for depriving the Africans of their land and forcing them into overcrowded conditions on land insufficient for their needs? Naturally not! The fault is, of course, none other than that of the Africans themselves and is the consequence of "undercapitalized, ignorant peasant farming . . . the failure of tribal agriculture . . . the low standard of husbandry, etc." What this apologist for settler "rights" deliberately glosses over is that traditional African farming is only possible when large areas are allowed to lie fallow. This prime necessity was rendered impossible by alienation and the expunging of the African's rights, thus forcing him to maintain his subsistence agriculture on land insufficient for his needs. The inevitable result is soil exhaustion, erosion and an overcrowded and underfed population. The solution is obvious, but one which is to the whites and their black lackeys unthinkable — a return to "primitive" *shifting agriculture*. Left to themselves the Africans, with their intimate and enormous knowledge of local conditions will enable the balance of nature, which the white man, with his "scientific" plundering has destroyed, to be righted. But this is a question which only the Africans may decide.⁴

In contrast to the state of African agriculture, the White Highlands retain their fertility because they have been consistently undercultivated and because of the abundant supply of "ignorant peasants" to maintain them. Further, with a monopoly of financial control, the whites have bolstered up their interests at the expense of "the undercapitalized peasant". "For example, in 1943 the Kenya Government voted the sum of £117,000 to European farmers to stimulate increased production of foodstuffs and other wartime essentials. Africans were refused any such aid. Instead, they were conscripted by the Government and forced to work on European plantations for 8/- to 10/- per month! . . . Five times as much is spent on roads, bridges and so on in the European areas as in other areas. All expenses are borne by the Government. No money is raised by local rates in European areas. In the native areas funds for development are raised by tribal rates; no Government funds are allocated. (Padmore, *ibid.*)⁵

⁴ Peasant agriculture, in whatever form, left unmolested, has never in the history of man despoiled the land. The term, rape of the earth, is synonymous with modern "scientific" agriculture which has endowed the world with such wonders as the dust-bowl of the U.S. Mid-West, the erosion-riddled countryside of South Africa, the Groundnut Scheme and the huge chemical combines whose "aids" to agriculture are poisoning man, beast, and earth alike.

⁵ "Before 1937, Europeans paid no Income Tax and when the Income Tax Ordinance was introduced in that year, it met with strong opposition from the white settlers, and produced very little revenue. [Lord Hailey: *An African Survey*]. In the first year of its operation only one in seven paid it. In that same year, Mr. Ormsby-Gore [now Lord Harlech], speaking as Colonial Secretary, informed the House of Commons that the Kenya Government had decided to exempt the mining companies from payment of royalties on gold production for two years, as such payments absorbed too large a proportion of the companies' profits! The Africans whether employed or unemployed by these companies were compelled to pay their hut and poll taxes amounting to about 24/- per annum." Padmore, *ibid.*

To ensure a constant supply of cheap labour or, as the hero of colonialism, the cynical land-shark Cecil Rhodes put it, "to teach them something of the dignity of labour", the tribal system was actively disrupted by the imposition of numerous taxes to force the Africans from the reserves into the European areas in search of work. Lord Delamere, in an address to the Colonial Association expressed the general settler sentiment "that natives should be forced out to make a living, that wages should be lowered, and that the amount of land held by natives should be limited. . . . We have got to come to legalize methods and force the natives to work. I hope that we can rely on the Government to meet the case." (Dilley, *ibid.*) Just how amply Lord Delamere's hopes were fulfilled as regards land we have already seen. Regarding forced labour, under The Defence Regulations of 1942 (African Labour for Essential Services) the Government granted itself power to conscript Africans in the cause of freedom and by "June 1942 the number of natives in civil employment was 241,509, of which 2,595 were conscripts. By the end of 1942 the number of conscripts had risen to 12,661, as compared with a total employment to the extent of 236,000; almost half these conscripts were employed on sisal (5,266); Government employment required 2,975; construction and excavation required 1,733; stock and agriculture required 1,233, and sugar, coffee and tea required smaller numbers." Conscription stopped in February, 1943, but was re-introduced in June, 1943. "By December, 1943, the numbers had decreased to 12,284, but in November, 1944, they had risen to 20,469, as compared with a total civilian labour force of 255,000." (*Labour Conditions in East Africa*, H.M.S.O., 1946.)

These are some of the measures undertaken to reduce the Africans to slavery. The result is a semi-starving peasantry eking out an existence in rural slums while a detribalized element gravitates about the shanty towns of the urban areas. It is officially stated that in and around Nairobi there are 10,000 families living without proper shelter and many receive wages on which they cannot live. According to a report by the Economic and Social Council of the U.N., the average *per capita* personal income of Europeans in Kenya stood in 1949 at £206, whereas the average for Africans was £6.

To ensure that the African remains a landless, tax burdened source of cheap or outright forced labour is the object of the degrading *herrenvolk* colour-bar legislation which effectively bars the African from all but manual labour, forces him to carry passes in his own country and effectively stifles any protests or attempts at reform by an electoral system whereby 100,900 Indians are represented by 6 *elected* members in the Kenya Legislative Council, 23,000 Arabs by 1 elected and 1 nominated, and 29,500 by 14 to whom we must add 26 official members who are European Civil Servants or Government nominees. Thus out of a total of 54 members in the Legislative Council, the Europeans have 40, while 5 million Africans are "*represented*" by 6 nominated members.

This picture of the benevolent trusteeship is, however, incomplete without a comparison of this hell with what existed in the state of "heathen barbarism". Miss Dilley records that "Government among the Bantu was simple, no paramount chief of the tribe being known to a tribe with the exception of the Masai . . . Each tribe was divided into clans

of one or more villages, the unit of social and economic life. The tribal officers, usually councils of elders, were judicial officials, whose duty it was to give expression to tribal opinion and to execute tribal will". Miss Dilley, quoting Major Orde-Brown, *The African Labourer*, goes on to say that ". . . mutual aid with food, shelter, or protection was the rule of the tribe, with its concomitant generous hospitality"; and that "While it was backward along some lines . . . [technologically—Author] the arrangements on sociological lines were good. There was little serious drunkenness, no pauperism, no paid prostitution, surprisingly little crime [surprising, that is for those who live in a society for which crime constitutes the mode of existence—Author]. All were adequately fed, clothed and sheltered." What have Sir Philip Mitchell and his gang of benevolent trustees to say to this, with "ignorant peasant farming"? When has there been a time in the glorious history of the great European civilization to which these smooth-tongued pariahs can point and say, "All were adequately clothed, fed and sheltered."

We have seen in detail the concrete economic causes; land-hunger, slum-living and largely unemployed African population in the towns and the colour bar, which have given rise to an African resistance and which the Colonial Secretary, with good reasons of his own, so glibly dismissed in his speech in favour of "dark superstitions" etc., supposedly the animating force of African resistance, called Mau Mau. Well, what of Mau Mau, that anti-European, anti-Christian movement which developed, so we are told, by encouraging racial hatred, enforcing secret oaths, intimidating witnesses, resorting to murder and other brutal and inhuman measures to achieve its avowed aim of "killing Europeans and their animals on four or five days each week"? To prove this we were presented with examples of the secret oaths, such as : "If I am sent with four others to kill a European enemy of this organization and I refuse, may this oath kill me" and "When the reed-buck horn is blown if I leave a European farm without killing the European owners may this oath kill me". The motives for this senseless terror, according to the press, are a "nostalgia for barbarism" and a return to the savage customs which the white man in his Christian horror has abolished. The *Times*, using the more scientific psychological approach, would have us believe that "it is unhappily true that the Kikuyu are suffering from too large a dose of civilization and its freedoms administered too suddenly." This is the official horror story.

Let us now examine the facts concerning these unprecedented outbursts of terrorism for, with newspaper crime waves, an investigation beyond the glaring headlines usually reveals a very different state of affairs. We will however limit ourselves to the last four months of 1952 for the "atrocities" which occurred in this period created the hysteria in the press and justified the passing of the decisive emergency measures by the Kenya Legislative Assembly. Throughout this period only 4 Europeans were murdered and of these not one can legitimately be associated with African terrorist activities. The press, of course, was quick to headline Mau Mau adherents as the murderers in each case with absolutely no proof to substantiate the statements and, characteristically, when evidence of the motives for the murders was brought forward, not one paper as far as I know, used its headlines to correct its false allegations. In fact, it is only in the more "responsible"

newspapers that one may find the truth, usually tucked away in general statements giving prominence to other matters. Of the first of these murders the *Times* (6/11/52), says, "John Chapman, an engineer from the Seychelles employed in Nairobi, has been charged before a magistrate with murdering his 35-year-old wife on 22nd September. Her body, bearing knife wounds was found in their bungalow on the edge of the Nairobi national park. Chapman was remanded in custody until 27th November. Earlier her death had been believed to be the work of Mau Mau terrorists." "The murder of Mrs. Margaret Wright [the second murder.—Author] 6 miles from Nairobi on 3rd October, the attack on Mr. Bindloss on 5th October, and that on Lt.-Col. and Mrs. Tulloch on 9th October, were crimes that were considered to be one of the consequences resulting from the disturbed conditions created by Mau Mau." And of the third, that of Mr. E. J. Bowyer, murdered on 27th October, the *Times* stated, "The police believe the motive was primarily robbery." (29/10/52). For the murder of Commander Meiklejohn, the fourth European murdered in the period under investigation, two African "Mau Mau terrorists" were hanged, but as Lord Ogleton stated in the House of Lords, "There has been no clear demarcation in official minds between the K.A.U., really a reforming body, Mau Mau which was a terrorist body, and the ordinary criminal who was cashing-in on the situation . . ." (*Times*, 19/10/52). A further example of the omission and distortion of facts by the Press, so clearly shown in the above cases, was brought to the notice of the House of Commons by a member, Mr. Teeling, who said: "that this country had got a rather wrong impression of what was going on in Kenya, and this was probably due to the Press. *The Kenya Weekly News* had pointed out that in the *Times* of 25th October it was stated that at Nahuru, 100 miles north of Nairobi concentrated attempts were being made to start Mau Mau oath-taking ceremonies on farms near the township. In this area a European woman, alone in her house except for her small daughter, found an African attempting to break in. She shot and killed him. *The Kenya Weekly News* continued that the District Commissioner at Nahuru stated in reply to this that there were no recent reports of Mau Mau ceremonies near there. The facts of the specific incident were that a native suffering from typhoid and delirious escaped from hospital.

"He attempted to break into the house presumably to steal clothing and food. The woman in question heard him and shouted for help. A member of the Home Guard just coming off duty heard a cry, saw the man and shot him. It was an unfortunate accident and nothing to do with Mau Mau." (*Times* 8/11/52).

Murders are nothing new in Kenya. Since the beginning of the European occupation there have been, in response to white terror and the economic political disintegration of African people, outbreaks and "incidents", some even very serious which nevertheless were "settled" without great publicity and certainly without the deliberate creation of hysteria. For example, the near-nigh nation-wide rebellion in Uganda in 1950 hardly received comment in the British press. And what of those, according to the Government, fanatic religious sects *Watu Wa Mungu*, *Dini ya Jesu Kristo* and the *Dini ya Msambwe*, which attacked missions, ambushed and killed police and threatened other Africans? Why was no publicity given to

their activities in the period 1947 to 1952?*

The "unprecedented outbreaks of violence" were the official reason for declaring a state of emergency in Kenya, but as we have already shown only 4 Europeans were killed between June and the end of November, of which 3 were definitely ordinary criminal acts and one may or may not be due to African terrorism. Had terrorism been a co-ordinated attempt on a nation-wide scale to murder the whites one would surely have expected a wholesale massacre of the whites, since the Kikuyu, the majority of whom are supposed Mau Mau adherents, working on European farms and residential areas, were in a most advantageous position for carrying out Mau Mau's supposed aim of killing and driving the whites out of Kenya. The drivel in the press stands definitely exposed when from all the horror stories, only one questionable corpse can be produced as evidence of the anti-white terror.

The lie of the "unprecedented outbreaks of violence" becomes an even more obvious fraud in the light of what Mr. St. A. Davies, Chief Native Commissioner in Kenya, had to say on his arrival in London, ". . . reports of activities of the Mau Mau, a secret society pledged to drive Europeans out of Kenya, had been greatly exaggerated. When questioned about terrorism, he replied 'What terrorism? I don't know of any terrorism. There is a subversive element and there has been a certain amount of trouble [by hungry and landless peasants.—Author], but it is confined to a small area and it is not as serious as newspaper reports make out. The point is that it has potential and that is why we think it is better to deal with it now before it gets worse'." (*Manchester Guardian*, 15/9/52). "Potential" — this is the lame excuse for the introduction of the barbarism which goes by the name of the restoration of the "Queen's Peace".

We will be reminded, however, that the Africans themselves have been the main target of Mau Mau vengeance and that in the period under investigation forty-nine Africans and one Asian were murdered. The killing of Africans prior to the emergency indubitably falls into the same category as the white murders, for one of the further "civilisatory" results of white rule, the direct outcome of impoverishment and the destruction of African society, is the *creation* of "gangster" and "hooligan" elements which have always been directed chiefly against fellow Africans. This element has "miraculously" disappeared and almost every crime is now attributed to African "terrorists" even though it has been officially admitted that "thugs are cashing in on the situation". Neither should we dismiss the probability that some of the murders might well be the work of *agents provocateurs*, always a favoured mechanism of imperial rule. The assassination of chiefs, headmen and "loyal" Kikuyu falls into a different category and it is necessary to show why they are the main target of terrorism.

Before the British occupation of Kenya chiefs with executive powers did not exist amongst the Kikuyu, government being carried out by a Council of Elders, subject to the right of recall. The whites decisively altered this and, under the guise of preserving tribal institutions completely shattered them by the introduction of chiefs and headmen, so as to have at the Government's disposal a paid staff of tax-collectors and informers.

*An account of these "religious cults" is given in chapter 18, *Behind God's Back* by Negley Farsen, Gollancz, 1949.

"The Government is empowered to appoint [not elect.—Author] headmen, either individuals or groups of elders. These are appointed, if possible, [and it rarely is.—Author] according to the wishes of the native location. When one is to be appointed, a general meeting of the members of the location is held, and members are asked to suggest two or three names. The District Commissioner sends the suggested names to the Provincial Commissioner who selects one. The Government reserves the right to disregard native selections, if none suggested is considered satisfactory. Pay for the Headman varies widely, since it is based on the amount of taxes paid [thus giving him a direct stake in the collecting of taxes.—Author]. They may get fifty shillings or ten pounds a month." (Mr. C. M. Dobbs in evidence before the Joint Select Committee, H. C. Paper No. 156, 1931. v. 2, pp. 830-1, quoted Dilley, *ibid.*).

"The Headmen maintain order, and they may employ assistants, they can compel attendance of individuals before the native tribunals, and can issue orders to restrict the manufacture of intoxicating liquor, prohibit or restrain drinking bouts, prohibit or restrict the cultivation of poisonous plants, prohibit acts likely to cause riots, prevent pollution or obstruction of water, regulate timber supply, require able-bodied men to work on communal benefits not more than six days per quarter, prevent evasion of tax or legal duty, require movement of natives from the jurisdiction of one Headman to another, prevent the spread of infectious disease, require the report of stolen goods, provide paid labor for emergency Government services, provide paid porters, and provide labor for designated public works. The District Commissioner may issue orders to the Headmen if necessary, or he may cancel an order of a Headman. Failure to obey the order of the Headman is an offense subject to fine or imprisonment." (Laws of Kenya, 1926, Section 8, quoted Dilley, *ibid.*)⁷ As for the rest of the "loyalty", the fact that they are used by the whites to hunt down and betray their fellow countrymen explains why they are being killed. Their behaviour repeats that of the quislings in the last war and they meet the same fate. In a report on recent Mau Mau murders the *Times* (17/7/53) states that "though one or two of these crimes were probably carried out by criminals engaged in robbery, the rest undoubtedly were by Mau Mau, and the victims include *in informers* and members of 'screening' teams engaged in identification work. These teams are operating throughout the country and by interrogation have obtained many confessions of oath-taking and have

⁷ "The Government reports tonight the smooth conduct of the operation concerning the evacuation of squatter families from the Leshau area of Thomson's Falls. Numbering 427, their tribal area is at Nyeri. New arrivals who are going to the location of Chief Muhyo heard from him a frank lecture on their folly. Addressing recent arrivals, he said:—

'I know every one of you has taken this loathsome Mau Mau oath. I know you have already divided European farms up in your minds into segments, which, you say, will be given to the most ardent members of your society. You have imbued among yourselves lawlessness, violence, and crime, and now you are reaping what you have sown and as a result it is unlikely that you will see those farms again. We are short of food here. You had plenty, but you did not appreciate it and now you must go short with us. I will not brook any nonsense from you and now that you have returned you had better commence immediately to mend your ways and to co-operate with the Government.' " (*Times* 3/12/52).

amassed much information about thousands of individuals.”*

These are the reasons for the assassination of quislings, but there still remains the reported slaughtering of innocent men, women and children — the Lari massacre in which, according to the press, at least 105 men, women and children were killed by terrorists mainly from the same area. The official view is that the attack on the location was directed “ . . . against all loyal Kikuyu in the district, mainly the African employees of the Government in the area and the ‘home guard’.” In the same report the *Times* (28/3/53) states that the district had an “active home guard”, that is they were active in co-operating with British troops and police. If the attack was the work of the African resistance movement then it was nothing but an attempt to eliminate the immediate active danger which threatened them and we can dispense with the moral horror against violence. As we shall see later it is when *counter-attacks* by the Kikuyu occur that the press shrieks savages, barbarians, etc. On the side of “justice” however, the pious and horror-stricken press almost weekly, and during the months of June and July of this year almost daily, jubilantly reported the successes in hounding down, wounding and killing of Africans (successes known to the *Times* and Kenya’s huntin’ and shootin’ fraternity as “a bag”) not with miserable *pangas* but with all the weapons of modern warfare; nor in these successful operations do they care to make distinctions of age or sex.* But that the Lari massacre was the work of “Mau Mau” is very much open to doubt, for on the very night of the attack the Home Guard was away patrolling the forest. Why in an active terrorist area was the location left defenceless? It is also very strange that although the attack is supposed to have lasted for three and a half hours during which time the terrorists killed people and fired homes, the police, troops and Home Guard remained apparently ignorant of the attack. Further, neither before nor since have “Mau Mau activities” accounted for more than a dozen lives at any one time while the usual pattern is the assassination of one or a few prominent quislings and their immediate guards. What does emerge from the Lari massacre is that just as the fictitious killing of whites was the pretext for the intro-

* Mr. Harry Thuku, who recently supported a broadcast message to the Kikuyu people by Mr. E. W. Mathu, leader of the African unofficial members of the Legislative Council, today broadcast a message. He said: “Today we, the Kikuyu, stand ashamed and looked upon as hopeless people in the eyes of other races and before the Government. Why? Because of the crimes perpetrated by Mau Mau and because the Kikuyu have made themselves Mau Mau.”

He called attention to the fact that people who had lived on European farms as squatters for many years in peace and friendship with their employers, were now being evicted because of Mau Mau crimes. He thanked all the Christians among the tribe for the courage shown in standing firm and urged them to continue to do so.

“The lies spread by Mau Mau that we will get self-government and land by criminal deeds, murders, and ill-will are not true,” he declared. “We can recall many good things done for us by the Government in the past, but we did not get them by causing trouble or murder; we got them by convincing the Government of our genuine needs.” (*Times* 13/12/52.) Mr. Thuku has since been assassinated.

* “In the Karatina area 52 terrorists have been killed in the past six days. These were not hangers-on, but mostly armed gangsters dressed in uniforms resembling those of the police and serving under ‘General’ China. *The bodies are being laid out for photographing by the African information services for use in propaganda.*”

duction of the emergency, so the night of 25th March served as the excuse for the intensification of military measures against all Kikuyu except the quislings.

Another aspect of Mau Mau activity which has received almost as much publicity as the murders is the ritual connected with that organization's ceremonies. To heighten the effect of the mystical terrors of old Africa and enforce the conviction that Mau Mau is composed of people only a short step removed from savagery in spirit and method, we are told tales in the best Hollywood and missionary darkest Africa tradition of secret midnight rites and oath-taking ceremonies at which the Mau Mau oath administrators with their paraphernalia of bones, goat's eyes, blood, etc., enrol willing and unwilling tribesmen as members of the secret society. At the same time the Government, on the grounds of *psychological warfare*, sanctions witchcraft with the appointment of official witchdoctors to undo Mau Mau oaths and curses. "An eminent witchdoctor, known locally as the 'Wizard of Oz' arrived here [Naivasha.—Author] today from the Kikuyu reserve to conduct cleansing ceremonies among Kikuyu workers on European farms here. It is expected that many who have unwillingly taken the Mau Mau oath will require his services. . . . The procedure is that *penitents* come forward, and a sheep is killed. *They confess to having taken the Mau Man oath* and, having eaten a sheep's eye, renounce and denounce the oath. . . . The wizard will start a cleansing tour in the Kinangop area as soon as possible, accompanied by the chief and the district officer." (*Times*, 14/11/52).¹⁰

As every Kikuyu is presumed guilty until he can prove his innocence those who dare refuse to renounce Mau Mau, whether or not they have taken the Mau Mau oath, face the possibility of arrest as suspected members, so that, according to the authorities, every Kikuyu seen by the witchdoctor is either a Mau Mau adherent or an ex-Mau Mau member. In this manner the Government brands the Kikuyu as a terrorist tribe down to the last man.¹¹ "It is unfortunately true that since the emergency was declared

¹⁰ "A letter just received from a friend in Kenya, and dated 22nd March, includes the following: 'I attended a Mau Mau "cleansing ceremony" the other day. All Kikuyu within a radius of about fifteen miles had been called to a "Baraza" by the D.C., and I suppose there were about 150 males and an equal number of women and children. I am afraid I am not being in the least bit loyal, but I must say the whole thing left a nasty taste in my mouth. The unfortunate Kikuyu must have had this in a literal sense as they had to touch with their lips a bunch of grass seven times, which had been dipped in the blood and entrails of a sheep. They were also "blooded" on their foreheads and ceremoniously cleansed by having a twig wetted with water shaken over them. Finally, they passed through two arches which were decorated with entrails of sheep.'

"Mau Mau is of the devil. This ceremony was of a kin, and it seems to me a case of Beelzebub casting out Beelzebub. Poor old X had to go through it all. Before his turn came I called him and said: 'Don't refuse this as it is the order of Government.' He replied: 'Oh! This means nothing.'"

"Surely an administration sponsoring filthy, degrading, and clearly ineffectual mumbo jumbo of this kind is going the hard way to secure the respect, loyalty, and co-operation of the people of Kenya, whether African, Asian, or European? One would welcome an official assurance that 'cleansing ceremonies' of the kind described by my friend are not, in fact, 'the order of Government' and that the D.C. concerned must have misunderstood his instructions." (*Manchester Guardian* 9/4/53, a letter from B. D. Nicholls.)

¹¹ "It is only since the advent of white "civilization" that destructive magic

five weeks ago every Kikuyu has been treated as guilty unless he could prove himself innocent of Mau Mau connections. This policy coupled with the Government's *strange* [sic] refusal to accept the proffered co-operation of the moderate African leaders, has made the Kikuyu feel that the Whites have branded them indiscriminately, and it has intensified their feeling that they are outcasts." (*Observer*, 23/11/52.)

It is therefore clear that the Government was not faced with a terrorist movement but had to create one, and this the emergency achieved. African fight for survival (now called terrorism) is nothing but an elemental reaction to this carefully planned terrorism of the British Government which, having first driven the Kikuyu to desperation, now in the filthiest manner uses their last ditch struggle for existence as the justification for all further repressive acts against them. That the intensification of the brutalities which have all along existed in Kenya could have only one result the Government well knew for it is as elemental as applying heat to a sealed kettle of water; violence can be the only result.

There is therefore quite obviously a special reason why the British Government and its administration in Kenya, in connivance with the press, are today presenting a false picture of what is actually happening in Kenya. In order to justify the restrictions, regimentation and terrorism imposed upon the Kenya peoples the white murders were pinned on to an invented Mau Mau.

Why has it been found necessary to create this Mau Mau menace?

The key to the answer is provided by that authority on Mau Mau atrocities, Mr. Lyttelton, in his statement to the House of Commons on his return from the Colony. "We had wide plans for the vast territories of Africa and everyone should know that in Kenya we were not to be put aside by a band of terrorists. We were in the country to develop it for the benefit of everyone, not to exploit it, and above all we were in the country to stay. Let there be no mistake about that." To understand what these plans are and why the Colonial Secretary attaches so much importance to them we must examine briefly the economic forces which determine Britain's colonial policy.

The decisive drive of world affairs today, determining the course of contemporary history, is the catastrophic switch to armaments at the expense of consumer production (decisive in the West since Korea in 1950) involving simultaneously the progressive destruction of those areas which heretofore supplied raw materials for consumer industry (largely the Far East) and the intensive recolonization of those areas now supplying the mineral and other materials for armaments production. The continued profitability of industrial monopoly capitalism increasingly interlaced with the state can alone be assured by these means, spelling on the one hand also the destruction of whole peoples (along with the economic resources which once sustained them) or on the other hand the reduction of whole peoples to slave labour.

The mainspring of this development, by virtue of her domination of the

(witchcraft) as distinct from healing magic, can flourish, for prior to the European invasion witchcraft was the only crime, apart from habitual theft, punishable by death amongst the Kikuyu. (See, *Facing Mount Kenya*, by Jomo Kenyatta, Secker and Warburg, 1938.)

world market, is the United States which must have a continued and guaranteed flow of raw materials to maintain the arsenal of "democracy" — at a profit. Indications that the U.S.A. must and is taking steps to ensure sources of raw materials are numerous. The Paley Report for example, in assessing the U.S. mineral ore position, urges that steps be taken to open up the undeveloped areas of the world as the country's internal supplies of most of the major mineral ores are either exhausted or fast approaching exhaustion because of the fact that the cost of American production is higher than in countries where abundant cheap labour is available. For most of the addictive ores, absolutely essential to arms production, the U.S. is, in any case, almost wholly dependent on imports, mainly from the under-developed areas. As far back as November, 1947, a headline in the *New York Times* boldly announced America's colonial aims: "Access to metals and oil is urged to repay our aid — Herter Group cites British and French colonial holdings of iron ore, nickel, chrome." And in the article we read: "'A systematic review of world resources on this basis,' said the Committee [The House Select Committee on Foreign Aid] '... would produce astonishing results in terms of possibilities for repayment.' — The Committee suggested that the change of Newfoundland to dominion status or to a partnership on federal terms with Canada might be made the basis of negotiations with the United Kingdom so that some *participation in (their) resources be allocated* as security against a United States loan to Britain." (*Contemporary Issues*, No. 9, pp. 7-8.) This participation in resources, although for the moment couched in general terms is nevertheless steadily making headway. In the *Nation's Business* [organ of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce] December, 1951, quoted in *Contemporary Issues*, No. 14, we read, "Now the British Empire has had its day and that country, regardless of the régime in power, can no longer sustain the imperial rôle. Many Americans assert that *we must take over as they give up*. It is a reasonable argument — provided that we can simultaneously show the maturity, etc. . ." Add to this statement the following: "Fifteen prominent businessmen concerned with investments abroad will report to the United States Government this week on how more Americans may be encouraged to invest overseas.

"They were invited to a private meeting with Government officials and asked to send in individual reports to the Government.

"Most of them agreed that it would be impossible to increase American private investment abroad unless three concessions were granted: —

"(1) Incentives to invest abroad in the form of favourable income-tax treatment at home;

"(2) A guarantee abroad that their earnings could be converted to dollars and brought home;

"(3) A guarantee abroad against expropriation, nationalization or any other form of seizure of businesses built up overseas.

"Some of the businessmen said that accompanying grant aid would be required in most cases, because many of the businesses might not be successful until foreign countries had improved their transport communications and commercial facilities." (*Financial Times*, 22/6/53.)

Britain's position is that of a country exhausted in the competitive struggle for survival and faced as an aftermath of the last war with the formidable

competition of America. Already she has been forced to relinquish her direct hold on India where, though the withdrawal was calculated to put India out of action as a competitor, American capital is already active. Elsewhere national movements, as in Persia and South America, or power political developments directed by America such as in China, have robbed her of large capital investments and profits, further crippling her. Nevertheless, gripped also by the decisive tendencies of the system of monopoly and armaments production, she turns in desperation to her hitherto "untouched areas" where in her days of prosperity she had nothing to seek economically or only something very indirectly, for the supply of raw materials to meet the demands of the switchover to armaments "growing demands for which it would be unwise to rely on other sources". The irony of the situation is that in so doing she must start from scratch developing extractive and associated subsidiary industries, not to mention transport and harbour facilities, for which she no longer has the necessary enormous capital resources;¹² and so, drawing even tighter the noose of colonial dependence on America that is strangling both her and the colonial peoples, is compelled to turn to America to fill the capital gap upon conditions dictated by America. In the last analysis Britain cannot withstand the pressure of this American "aid" (as it is officially called) and must succumb and hand over her one-time golden fleece (the colonial empire). At the same time this development is not without its twists and turns; competition forces Britain to struggle to avoid her fate, and she is therefore compelled to take the only path open to her to save a few of the crumbs — that is, the policing of Africa for American interests (Britain's political "maturity" expressing itself in this form). In this rôle, Britain's task is to introduce and prepare the conditions for, the intensive recolonization of Africa on the basis of slave labour. It is within this framework that the so-called "political advancement" of the colonies towards "self-government" must be evaluated, when it is seen as no more than the attempt to assimilate quisling elements into the apparatus of repression in order (wherever possible) to try and ease the transition to a slave economy by deceiving the masses of the African peoples and public opinion abroad. Nevertheless, the semblance of reform or, to put it better, this *appearance of independence* must sooner or later show itself to be a mere appearance (witness Guiana!) and the process will then meet with the sustained and increasingly generalized opposition of the African and all colonial peoples.

Returning to Kenya, this development can already be seen. "The production of gold in Kenya is beginning to yield its pride of place to non-precious minerals. Production of soda ash and salt have collectively for

¹² "In the 12 months before the Government came into power we were running an international deficit of £600m. a year, and in those circumstances it was not possible quickly to develop the colonial territories. Now we had an international surplus, but on nothing like the scale necessary for this task. It was clear therefore that the need for increased savings in this country — whether from private sources, the Corporation, or the Government was of first importance to colonial development.

"He could not say whether in the next 10 years these savings would reach the necessary level. From our own resources we should have great difficulty in proceeding at the pace which would be necessary, and the promotion of the flow of foreign capital, above all by way of loans, was a prime matter of policy." (The Times (17/7/53), reporting Mr. Lyttelton's speech in the House of Commons.)

many years been of considerably more value than gold, but kyanite and its derivative mullite [essential in the production of jet engines.—Author.] have now, it is estimated, also equalled gold production in value. Some promising graphite occurrences have also been brought to the development stage during the year and considerable supplies of good quality asbestos (of the anthophyllite type) are in course of development. Diatomite production, mostly for local use, expanded considerably during the year. A newcomer to the mineral field of Kenya is carbon dioxide natural gas, marketed by Carbacid Manufacturing Co. The total value of minerals won in Kenya in 1951 is estimated at approximately £1,900,000 as compared with £1,373,000 for 1950. . . . The copper-gold-lead-zinc property formerly known as Macalder Mine, now renamed Macalder-Nyanza Mines Limited, and operated by the Colonial Development Corporation, is being actively developed and the commercial production of copper concentrates was started during the year." (*Colonial Report on Kenya, 1951, H.M.S.O.*) To round off this picture of "progress" in the colony is a report by the Governor-General Sir Evelyn Baring (*Times, 29/10/52*). "The Governor said it was expected they would maintain industrial development in the Colony. It was hoped to bring into production factories for the manufacture of cement, matches, metal drums and soft-fibre containers, as well as a new brewery and an aluminium rolling-mill. The Government had been approached over the construction of an oil refinery at Mombasa. [To be constructed by the Shell Company at a cost of £3 million.—Author]. It was also carrying on negotiations over the grant of an oil exploration licence covering a considerable area of the Colony. It was expected that 1953 would see the sale of Kenya-produced graphite and the exploitation of asbestos in the Teita Hills".

The plunder of the new raw materials is increasing in scope and tempo. Although on the surface this new industrialization of the Colony may appear progressive it is in fact disastrous and the claims made in London that the African peoples will benefit from it are so much rubbish. The search for new ores and their processing is part of the general switchover, the plundering of the world's resources for armaments production which can only expand by destroying its historic basis — the production of commodities for consumption. It is hardly surprising, once this is understood, to read in the Colonial Report for the territory that "The Geological Survey operated at full strength throughout the year . . . This work has been very greatly assisted by American geologists made available by the Economic Co-operation Administration." (*Colonial Report on Kenya, 1951, ibid.*)

This process can only result in the outright destruction of what is left of peasant agriculture and in an increase of the pressures which drive the Africans from their sole means of existence, the land, thereby creating the needed supply of labour to feed the developing extractive industries — the "vast plans for Africa".

Having shown the motives for the seemingly senseless newspaper crime-wave we can now examine in detail how the transformation is being achieved.

Following hard on the sudden appearance of Mau Mau the desired state of emergency was declared and the enactment of a series of equally desired brutal measures was announced for which, for public consumption, Mr.

Lyttelton had to apologize, describing them as repugnant as he asked for sympathy for having [*sic?*] to introduce them. No doubt the masters in the Kremlin will give consoling advice to so promising a pupil. "The Kenya Legislative Council today completed approval of the emergency measures to combat the Mau Mau anti-European terrorist organization. The measures, designed to strengthen the Government's hand against subversive activities, include control of newspapers and other organizations, restrictions on the movements of Mau Mau members, [as almost all Kikuyu "belong" to Mau Mau this means policing of the whole people.—Author.] and a system for registration of societies with more than 10 members." (*Times*, 2/10/52). Following this declaration came an announcement in the *Times* (11/11/52): ". . . the Governor in Council has proclaimed 11 districts in which resident magistrates and other officials empowered to hold first class courts have been given Supreme Court powers to deal with offences such as unlawful oaths, compelling anyone to take such an oath, management of an unlawful society, arson or attempted arson, setting fire to crops and growing plants, and conspiracy to commit a felony." And three days later the same paper reports: ". . . a Government spokesman said the third phase of the operation to establish intensive policing of the Kikuyu reserves on a permanent basis was being speeded up to the utmost. Each location will have a police station and in some extensive locations there will be additional police posts. *Communal labour* [i.e. forced labour.—Author.] for construction work is being provided locally." Ten days after this statement came the report that "Fifteen Kikuyu tribesmen were killed and 27 wounded today when Kenya police opened fire on a large African crowd at Kiraware, fourteen miles from Thika, north of Nairobi. The police, under Inspector W. Blackwell, went to the reserve after being warned by an informer that a crowd was gathering." (*Manchester Guardian*, 24/11/52). "The revised official figures are 17 dead and 29 wounded in addition to an unknown number killed and wounded by the corporal's party earlier. The police took 350 prisoners. *The purpose of the meeting was to resist the opening of new buildings for a police post which the local people had been forced to construct.* The resistance meeting took the form of a Mau Mau ceremony, as those attending had shed their shoes and hats and all articles of European clothing, which is the customary preliminary action." (*Times* 25/11/52). The form of this meeting, estimated at over 2,000, is a matter of indifference; what is important is that the people were resisting an attempt by the Government to force them to build prisons. Had the meeting been instigated by armed Mau Mau fanatics the police would not have left the scene without loss of life but the "forces of law and order" numbering only 34 were able to arrest 350 people after killing and wounding many of the "fanatics". It is clear that once again Mau Mau is used to cover up the savagery of a government intent on terrorizing the whole area and creating and intensifying resistance. This was a first step, and soon after the "incident" the Government "got tough" as the *Times* describes it, with the enactment of another far-reaching measure. "Where a district officer believes that the inhabitants of an affected area have failed to make reasonable efforts to prevent a crime or to prevent the escape of guilty persons, or that they are members of or actively support a banned society, he can confiscate their cattle and vehicles and close the shops or markets

in the area for 14 days. The Government may release the seized goods or order them to be confiscated and sold." (*Times* 25/11/52).

Pure unadulterated Stalinism which enabled the Government to intensify without restraint its policy of destroying the last vestiges of hope the people might have felt. From this day Africans could not work, speak or move without the possibility of being rounded up like cattle at any time and imprisoned as supposed or suspect Mau Mau adherents. The passing of this "civilized" act followed another "incident" at Nyeri where ". . . police and troops had rounded up 4,000 head of cattle belonging to the Kikuyu at a village in the Thigonge location, near the spot where Chief Nderi was murdered. The cattle were taken to a guarded compound. The village is a notorious trouble spot from which all the young men, and most of the young women departed after the murder." (*Times* 11/11/52). Later this is reported in the *Times* of 2/12/52: "Of 3,700 cattle seized, 1,800 have been kept finally, and of 6,000 sheep and goats seized 3,300 have been kept finally. A committee was appointed to decide which stock should be returned. This consisted of Mr. G. Gamble, the district agricultural officer, assisted by African chiefs and headmen. Cattle were first returned to Africans of proved loyalty and to those who could prove an alibi at the time of the murder. Some strayed stock belonging to people in adjoining locations was also returned.

"Of the balance 50 per cent. was then returned in accordance with the Governor's instructions. The remainder are being sold. The proceeds, after deduction of the costs of the operation, including care of the stock, will be disposed of in a manner still to be decided on." The decision was announced on 28/1/53 when "The Kenya Government today confiscated all the African-owned cattle, crops and vehicles seized under emergency regulations by the District Commissioners of Nakuru and Kiambu towards the end of last year. Orders announcing the confiscation, signed by the Governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, were published in the 'Official Gazette' today." (*Manchester Guardian*). First their property and then their livelihood destroyed. The desired result was again achieved. "A Government spokesman said today that the round-up of livestock in the Nyeri district had had a shattering effect on local Kikuyu.

"Many owners of livestock who come to see their confiscated property have departed crestfallen," he said. "It must be emphasized that this confiscation of livestock was a punitive action taken against that section of the tribe which has proved unco-operative and hostile." (*Times* 13/11/53). This same regulation which made collective guilt legal also "empower(s) officials to order resident labourers (squatters) off farm, forest or railway lands if they are proved in any way guilty of supporting an unlawful society or its members. [Such as supporting those "Mau Mau" who resisted the building of prisons!—Author.] The spokesman said houses from which squatters are removed would not be fired or destroyed. He said any removal of residents from one area to another would not create a new homeless population because Kikuyu squatters still had a footing in Reserve areas and could return there and build new homes." (*Manchester Guardian*, 25/11/52). These "residents" were obviously "lucky" for in other areas the police and army were not so "benevolent" and razed whole locations to the ground. The last sentence is at best ignorance of the facts but more

likely a deliberate dressing of the situation; a report in the *Times* bears this out. "A large-scale plan to remove all Kikuyu from Ol Kalou, North Kinangkop, and the Wanjohi Valley districts is being put into effect at once. They must leave by midnight on Monday. The Member for Agriculture is being charged with finding new land where most of these evicted can be settled for the time being, as many would find difficulty in resettling themselves in the tribal reserve. *In fact many families who were born on European farms have probably never seen Kikuyuland.* (6/2/53).

The outcome of this new promulgation was another incident, a report of which was published in the *Times* of 26/11/52, which reads like a description of Stalinist henchmen in action. "Sterner measures against Kikuyu in settled areas were initiated today when between 2,000 and 3,000 men, women, and children, with their household goods, sheep and goats, were collected from farms in the Leshaw ward and confined behind barbed wire. The Leshaw ward is that in which a series of attacks on Europeans have recently taken place, culminating in the murder of Commander Meiklejohn. Lorries driven by men of The Lancashire Fusiliers and the 4th Uganda Battalion, The King's African Rifles, arrived at the farms, where labourers and squatters were summoned to *barazas* (gatherings). The Kikuyu were then driven away. In addition to farm labourers, house servants were taken, as in some cases they have been privy to attacks on their masters. About 20 farms were involved and the surprising thing was the high proportion of women.

"The first two farms visited had about 30 men, 100 women, and 600 sheep or goats each. The explanation is that squatters who have their own plots of land have as many wives as possible in order to make them work on the land.

"The operation went off smoothly. The men, impassive and inscrutable, were taken in lorries to a prison camp at Thomson's Falls, where they squatted, each clad in a dun-coloured blanket. A police officer at a table in the middle then interviewed each in turn. In the middle of the enclosure stood a newly erected gallows, encased in corrugated iron, with a broad set of steps leading up to it. This has been erected because the policy now is to hang local murderers when convicted in local prisons instead of in Nairobi. *Ordinary criminals* in huts at one end of the enclosure were being used as couriers to marshal the newcomers, and armoured cars patrolled the perimeter.

"Women and children were taken to buildings on a racecourse half a mile away. The women, wearing blue or bright yellow dresses, appeared to treat the move as a picnic; they laughed and talked as they unloaded sacks and jerricans. They, at any rate, will be comfortably accommodated under cover during the night, which is cold and rainy hereabouts.

"The whole operation, distasteful [!] though it may have been, was carried out with decorum and humanity. There was no question of ill words or buffets, and it is evident that the administration's efforts to curb such tendencies have had an effect.

"It was a grim job for the soldiers from Lancashire, and it was evident from their faces that they felt it to be so. Under the regulations the completion of the operation will be reported to the Governor, who has to decide what to do with the internees. They are expected to be *repatriated*

to Kikuyu reserves. *The stock can be sold. The crops of squatters can also be confiscated.*"

Was the Government forced to make this reprisal to subdue fanatics who were slaughtering innocent men, women and children? No. The excuse which only brutal Government terrorists could invent, was the murder of a single individual, Commander Meiklejohn, and for this crime only 2 Africans were sentenced to death. Even if the sentenced men were terrorists, British so-called "justice" went beyond an eye for an eye in penalizing a whole community and thus revealed itself for the ruthless machine it is.

Again there can be no doubt as to the Government's primary interest of creating resistance and terrorizing the population.

The end of the first phase was initiated when the Governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, announced new measures to check terrorism. "The first of these is the appointment of a personal staff officer to co-ordinate the activities of all Government officers in the field. He will be Colonel G. Rimbault, at present Chief of Staff to General Sir Alexander Cameron, Commander-in-Chief East Africa Command . . . Colonel Rimbault will perhaps not be a Templer or a De Lattre, but he should be able to meet the real needs." (*Times* 23/12/52). A Templer, in the person of General Erskine has since been appointed.

"The second measure may seem obscure to people in England, but it touches a matter of burning controversy out here. It recalls that, in the interests of law and order, a regulation has already been made requiring every Kikuyu to carry his registration certificate. [As in South Africa.—Author].

"In order to improve security for employers of labour, and in order that they may have the best possible means of distinguishing between the many peaceable Kikuyu in Kenya and those who have been concerned in the campaign of violence, this will now be supplemented by a new regulation requiring every Kikuyu in, or seeking, employment to possess a record of service, which he will be required to produce on first employment and on change of employment . . . this new regulation will apply to the Kikuyu, and to the Kikuyu only, and it is hoped that the provisions will not be permanent; but there is little doubt that these will have to remain in force after expiry of the emergency, probably for a period of years." (*Times* 23/12/52) These regulations at one stroke destroy the limited bargaining power of the Kikuyu.¹² Recalling what was said earlier on the type of labour required for "development", this measure will now be understood by people in England. The necessity for improved security for employers already armed to the teeth with laws, police and troop support, etc., is just official eyewash to camouflage forced labour.

"The third paragraph of the Government's statement, relating to the

¹² The Kenya Labour Commissioner, Mr. F. W. Carpenter, announced here today that, ". . . for Government record purposes, every Kikuyu employed in areas outside the native land units will be photographed this year. The scheme will affect about 120,000 persons in urban and agricultural areas.

"Copies of the photographs will be affixed to the employment record cards already carried by African employees. The cards will also bear the thumb-prints of the holders, and as an additional safeguard the photographs will show their identity number and the serial number of the photograph." (*Times* 14/1/53.)

tribal tax on the Kikuyu, points out that the emergency will lay a heavy burden on the taxpayers of all races in Kenya. The cause of this has been the campaign of violence which has been spread among the Kikuyu people. The statement goes on to point out that any special contribution made by the Kikuyu cannot but fall far short of the full cost of the emergency, but the Government feels that some contribution should be made by the tribe. It accordingly proposed a 20s. tax, over and above existing ones, for a period of two years."¹⁶

"District commissioners will be given full powers to exempt all who have co-operated with the forces of law and order before the date of this announcement. They will also be entitled to grant exemptions on the ground of poverty[!]. This measure seems fair, though it may well prove difficult to operate.

"The costs of the emergency are likely eventually to cut into the funds set aside for general development. This means that Africans throughout Kenya will suffer, and it is obviously only fair that the Kikuyu should make some special contribution, so that the rest should suffer as little as possible. Equally, it would be manifestly unfair if loyal Kikuyu were made to suffer as well. It is likely that this collective retribution exacted by the Government will be reinforced by Nature, because the virtual failure of the rains, coupled to a larger extent with the interruption of agricultural work during the emergency, now threatens the Kikuyu with a food scarcity." (*Times* 23/12/52). "In a preamble to the statement setting forth these measures in detail, the Governor emphasizes the Government's determination to continue with its existing policy of raising the standard of life of all African inhabitants." (*Times* 23/12/52). Glib phrases from the mouths of murderers. No words can express the horror of this cynical barbarism which must move every person with a scrap of humanity to anger and revulsion. Clearly we must believe the worst of politicians to arrive anywhere near the truth of any situation.

Vigorously following out their policy of "bringing about a speedy solution to the trouble in Kenya" the Government announced on the 6/2/53 another law which ensured the growth of an N.K.V.D. mentality among those whites who still had any remnants of humanity and left the Kikuyu people at the mercy of any white sadist who cared to exercise his "right" on suspicion."¹⁷

"The Government to-day strengthened security measures by declaring the whole Kikuyu tribal reserve and affected areas of European settlement 'special areas' under the emergency regulations. In districts

¹⁶ The member for finance, Mr. E. A. Vasey, speaking a week before the enactment of special contributions on the cost of the emergency said that, "... the picture was not so gloomy as it might seem. 'So far our economy seems to be standing the strain quite well and a great deal of the expenditure on the emergency is flowing into the economic bloodstream of the colony.' The financial position of the country was still sound and credit also good." (*Times* 19/2/53.) Which means that these dirty parasites are reaping the benefits of the "boom" which the Kikuyu are paying for in lives, property, and now their livelihood.

¹⁷ "Protests to the Governor of Kenya about the use of collective punishment, violence towards suspected persons, and third-degree methods by both coloured and white police, in the present attempts to gain information from the Kikuyu tribe about Mau Mau activities have recently been made by the Africa secretary of the Church Missionary Society, Canon T. C. F. Bewes. . . . At a press conference this afternoon he was unwilling to give many details of such violence

thus gazetted the police and military are entitled to use firearms

or to put his charges into strong language. He left to go straight to the Archbishop, with whom he would be 'completely frank'. Asked why he was hesitant about giving further details he replied: 'If I had not been assured [in Kenya, by the Governor] that the situation was being taken care of, I would have gone much further today.'

"The Church Missionary Society is in a position to go much farther, but as yet is unwilling to do so lest the remedial work in Kenya be embarrassed. In Kenya, apparently, Canon Bewes's protests about mass punishment were answered by the authorities stating that they now recognized that mass punishment was not producing results. The Governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, agreed to give Canon Bewes specific assurances that the use of excessive force by settlers, military forces, or police would be dealt with, and the inference was that a directive to this effect has already been issued.

"One of Canon Bewes's stories ran as follows:— A few days ago a police informer told the police that a certain Kikuyu was hiding a cache of arms. A police posse made up of Africans and probably including one European went out to look for the man. He was an adherent of a local Christian mission. He was suffering from tuberculosis of the spine and was not fit to work. When he was found he was questioned and yielded no evidence or any knowledge of a store of arms. He was taken away and beaten. Questioning continued. Beating continued to make him confess and he died under beating. A missionary reported the case to the local administrative officer and the inquest was held last Monday. Canon Bewes had not heard its result. But this he said 'is not an isolated incident.' " (*Manchester Guardian* 10/2/53.)

"As Kenya Europeans this morning were acclaiming the news that the Government will adopt Malaya tactics to deal with Mau Mau, the British-owned and British-edited newspaper 'Baraza' appeared with a forthright indictment of the treatment of prisoners and suspects by the police and military.

"'Baraza', which circulates to 30,000 Africans, states in an editorial that while the security forces are starting to smash the Mau Mau gangs, for which people should be grateful, it is undeniable that they are making many enemies.

"The newspaper asserts that police reservists are worse offenders than police or military. 'The activities of the Kenya police reserve have gained many new recruits for Mau Mau.'

"In the police reserve there were young men of whom 'undisciplined sadists' would not be an unfair description, the article states. Many of them were often to be heard boasting of the way they had beaten prisoners. The editorial adds that 'all cases that can be substantiated should be referred to the courts, where the proceedings can become public, rather than be dealt with departmentally.' " (*Observer* 12/4/53.)

"The climax to allegations about improper conduct by the security forces in Kenya has been reached in a demand by the Kenya African Union for the appointment of a commission of experts from England to inquire into the activities of the security forces."

"In a 2,000-word statement the union asserted that 'sworn affidavits' were pouring into its offices alleging 'shootings' by members of the security forces.

"'The conduct of the Home Guards had been far from satisfactory,' the statement said. 'People have been beaten, their property taken away. They have been left with nothing at all to live on. This explains why terrorists are increasing in number.'

"Charging the authorities, the union declared: 'Already in Nairobi's African locations complaints have been made with regard to action by the police during inspections made at night. People are ordered to leave their rooms and stand out when inspections are made. This sort of treatment is not only lacking in logic but it also helps to promote suspicion between the Government and people.' " (*Observer* 24/5/53.)

"It is expected that the *bag* will be between 2,000 and 3,000, mainly Kikuyus. The total ultimately gathered in for questioning may be even larger, as nobody really knows how many Africans live illegally in these forests, and this is a problem of policy which will have to be sorted out when the emergency is over. Today these forests are still a menace to the settled areas." (*Times* 15/1/53.)

against anyone failing to halt when challenged. Almost daily now there are reports of Kikuyu being shot in special areas for failure to halt or for attempts to escape." (*Times* 6/2/53). Then on the 12/2/53 the *Times* reports that, "The Governor directed attention to the new power recently taken under which a district officer can remove any Kikuyu regarded as a threat to public order. This regulation enables employers to name Kikuyu they think likely to be implicated if any trouble arose. No evidence is required other than the employer's report of personal suspicions. Where a contract is broken thereby the employer is called on to pay one-third of the wages due in lieu of notice and the Government the balance." (*Times* 12/2/53). The result of these and other repressive measures was that by June, 1953, between 50,000 and 60,000 Kikuyu under force or voluntarily, have returned to the starving and overcrowded reserves. ". . . the great return of Kikuyu to their reserves continues. More and more transit camps and detention camps are being hurriedly constructed to take thousands of men, women, and children who are being pushed out of the European areas and back into the reserves where they have no means of subsistence. Ten thousand of these evacuees are being held in a number of large camps in the Rift Valley.

"In addition to the people now in the camps, a further 30,000 have been repatriated through them since the middle of January, and the Government considers that the camps have fulfilled their purpose. A long stay in camp has been bad for the morale of evacuees, especially among those Kikuyu who have hitherto been loyal." (*Observer* 29/3/53).

"Transit camps are full and present a source of potential danger in their present crowded state. Prisons are also filled beyond capacity and such incipient movements as the defiance of the regulations which require all Kikuyu seeking work outside reserves to be photographed may well add to the pressure on existing prison accommodation.

"This is the background to the appeal which Sir Evelyn Baring broadcast. He said: 'It would be useless, in fact very harmful, suddenly to empty one area of Kikuyu if those Kikuyu could not be contained elsewhere and no proper arrangement could be made for their control, food, transit, and reabsorption.

"Should many thousands of Kikuyu suddenly be turned off farms and out of forests in settled areas, more especially from what hitherto have been less troubled areas, the reserves would be swamped and the result would be a horde of hungry men, women, and children wandering around the country. These soon would become desperate, would swell the numbers of existing gangs and form new ones, many of which would undoubtedly operate in settled areas as well as from the forests and reserves. We would then justly be accused of having shown great inhumanity and, incidentally, no advantage would be gained." (*Times* 12/2/53).

In a leader assessing Government gains since the establishment of an emergency committee on the Malayan pattern and the appointment of Major General W. R. N. Hinde as Director of Operations (appointed partly in response to the settlers' demands for a Templer) the *Times* (28/4/53) states that:—"These successes should not, however, be allowed to cloud the fact that many serious obstacles still remain to be overcome. The worst of these is the 'return of the Kikuyu from settled areas to the

reserves. The first of these moves took place at the end of November, when 3,500 were forcibly repatriated from the Leshau Ward near Thomson's Falls. It was evident then that the intrusion of so many acknowledged Mau Mau initiates into the reserves tended to set back all the careful work that had been done to nurse back confidence in Government among the Kikuyu in their home country. Since then this return to the reserve has become a voluntary movement, fostered by Mau Mau, and General Hinde in his vigorous directive admitted that the authorities were not physically capable of stopping it."

After directly forcing the Kikuyu back to the Reserves, on the one hand and on the other passing laws which left the remaining no alternative but "voluntary" return, this butcher speaks of the migration being uncontrollable. Let us go back to *three days* before this statement was made to facts which justly accuse the Government of — not inhumanity for that is too tame a word for the terror deliberately imposed on these people but — Stalinist bestiality. "Nairobi was today declared a special area, which means that persons ignoring a challenge to halt may be shot. The Government has taken this step to facilitate large-scale 'screening' operations at Kariobangi, so as to be able to deal with suspects trying to escape through the cordon. Officially it is explained that it is not considered that the security of Nairobi had deteriorated, but it is held to be desirable [to increase the panic amongst the Europeans—Author] to bring Nairobi and district into line with the rest of the Central Province. [No doubt another act of "administrative convenience."—Author.]

"The large shanty township of Kariobangi, in the valley where smaller illegally erected shanty villages were destroyed a few days ago,"¹⁸ was surrounded this morning by nearly 1,000 troops and police, and the inhabitants were removed for 'screening'. Many Mau Mau adherents and suspects were detained.

"The population of this overcrowded slum of mud and wattle houses has grown rapidly recently to 12,000, but more than half, *warned by earlier operations*, had left their homes. Kariobangi is now to be razed, and thousands of Africans are searching for accommodation in the already crowded Nairobi locations." (*Times* 25/4/53). And to add to the praises of Government "humanity": "A Government spokesman stated in the Legislature that Africans summarily evicted from shanty villages near Nairobi will not be compensated, because their houses were illegally erected on private land. He was replying to a question by Mr. Eliud Mathu, the African unofficial member. When asked what action was being taken to rehouse the evicted persons, the spokesman said the city council was providing an area where Africans could erect houses under supervision, and work on the provision of essential services for these was being speeded up in view of the recent evictions" (*Times* 6/5/53).

The following report from the *Times* (6/10/53) needs no comment. "At dawn today Mr. Timmerman, Nairobi's recently-appointed commandant of police, launched a series of actions which he hopes will rid the city of 15,000 to 20,000 Kikuyu estimated to be here without authority. He

¹⁸ "Police today carried out a round-up of African men, women, and children living in shanty villages on the perimeter of Nairobi. These villages have been unlawfully erected and came into being on account of the housing shortage . . ." (*Times* 18/4/53.)

said that it was not the intention that the clean-up should take the form of a 'massive operation', but the pressure on 'spivs', idlers, and their womenfolk would be remorseless.

"It will go on and on until the city is clear. We must get these people out."

Repeatedly we see the deliberately engineered creation of resistance, this time by forced "repatriation" to the reserves and the terrorizing of those who remain in the White Highlands. As General Hinde admitted, "A less favourable feature was the increase in number in the gangs, which he said was due to the repatriation of adherents and supporters from the settled areas. Though offering an easier military target, these larger gangs presented police and home guard posts with a graver problem." (*Times* 20/5/53). That this move is not a "bowing to circumstances", but part of a plan considered down to the last detail, is shown in the following statement by Kenya's Solicitor-General, made in the Legislative Council (*Manchester Guardian* 27/11/52), in which he admits the only possible outcome of collective punishment. "Mr. Griffith-Jones, who was speaking on estimates for the Department of Law and Order, said collective punishment was 'ordinarily the last resort'. In itself it achieved nothing and it could be a double-edged weapon.

"It was at its worst when imposed on people already subjected to intimidation. If it was used, it was essential that the resentment it caused should be deflected from those who administered it to those who were guilty of the original crimes.

"Terror did not pay even against terror. It was like putting a lid on a pot that continued to boil."

Nevertheless in the months that followed this statement, the Government continued and still continues with increasing pressure to hold down the lid as the following figures indicate. "From the beginning of the emergency to 6th July, 1,300 Africans were killed by the security forces, 514 are believed to have been wounded, and 2,673 were taken prisoner. Between 27th March and 6th July the corresponding figures are 1,062 killed, and 349 believed wounded. Between 11th May and 11th July, 223 persons were taken prisoner." When these figures were made known in the House of Commons by Mr. Lyttelton, (*Times* 16/7/53), Mr. Shinwell, Labour member, pointed out that, ". . . in what appears to be three and a half months 1,300 [actually 1,062.—Author] Mau Mau alleged terrorists have been killed . . . It is twice the number of fatal casualties that our troops have suffered in Korea since the beginning of the emergency."

"Mr. Lyttelton states in a written reply, that between the beginning of the emergency and 30th June, 112,529 persons were taken into custody in connection with the disturbances. Of these 15,834 were released immediately on proving their identity, 53,308 were released after screening, 42,356 have been tried, and 1,031 are on remand. Those not considered to be badly indoctrinated are restricted to their location in the reserve, where contact with the growing resistance to Mau Mau is having the desired effect. Those Mau Mau adherents who are deeply committed will pass through special rehabilitation centres before their release." (*Times* 16/7/53).

"The Government decided today that the repatriation of Kikuyu to the tribal reserve is to cease because in present circumstances it is impossible

to absorb more than the 100,000 who have already been repatriated or who have returned voluntarily or compulsorily.

"The decision has been taken, says the official announcement, bearing in mind that large areas of the Kikuyu reserve are either prohibited areas or unsuitable to bear a further influx of population. The intention now is that any Kikuyu who fail to pass the 'screening' teams now operating in the Rift Valley and Nyanza provinces, and who are required to be removed on security grounds, will be accommodated at camps and employed on public works, on roads, and land rehabilitation. Kikuyu rejected by the 'screening' teams will be placed temporarily in transit camps while arrangements are made to direct them to public works projects.

"The Government announced today plans for putting protective fencing round certain African locations in Nairobi and for the introduction of a policy of tribal segregation. Fencing [the *Times* has since announced that the fencing is of barbed wire.—Author] will be a temporary expedient to ensure safety by denying the locations as a refuge for gangsters. In addition, the big African location of Eastleigh, which adjoins Nairobi's airport, has been declared a prohibited area to members of the Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru tribes. The Government also plans a Kikuyu satellite township seven miles from the city for Africans displaced as a result of tribal segregation." (*Times*, 30/9/53) Kenya's Templer has now obtained the desired Malayan solution of turning the Kikuyu into active "terrorists" or passive supporters of "terrorism". After eight months of being hunted, slaughtered, seeing their homes razed, cattle and other property stolen and crops confiscated or burned, "It is evident that the Kikuyu, despite the growing strength of the police and military forces are continuing to lose all regard for law and order and are becoming more willing to sacrifice their lives in what they believe is the cause of justice for Africans." (*Observer* 29/3/53)."

For an assessment of the emergency and especially the last three months we quote the *Observer* (14/6/53). "The mounting tempo of the punitive campaign against Mau Mau supporters and suspects has its practical disadvantages. Faced with the alternative of either dying in their hideouts or being summarily tried and executed, it is not surprising that so many Kikuyu prefer to die in action. Already 1,000 have been killed; the Govern-

¹¹ "Most of a Mau Mau gang of 15 committed suicide in the Aberdare Forest yesterday by jumping over a 70 ft. cliff when they were cornered after being pursued by a patrol of the Kenya Regiment . . ." (*Times* 1/5/53.)

Giving details of "the gallant and successful action by a force of troops and police against a terrorist gang estimated at 150" the *Times* (11/5/53) Correspondent reports that: "The attackers included both men and women dressed in police and Army type clothing. An officer with the patrol formed the opinion that the terrorists were stimulated by some drug, as even when facing Bren gun fire at 15 yards' range they came on unhesitatingly during the 20 minutes' fight.

"Having escaped being overwhelmed, the patrol retired along the road, still firing. Thirty bodies were seen to be removed by the gang. After being reinforced, the patrol, returning, killed another five terrorists, and when a Harvard bomber and police aircraft arrived the remnants of the gang were bombed and machine-gunned."

Having only fought in the cause of conscript "freedom" and being ideologically drugged, this officer cannot recognize a desperate bravery for what it is. He must degrade the last remnants of his humanity by smearing the action of a people fighting for their lives.

ment apparently accepts the prospect of having to double this figure before the active trouble in Kenya has been wiped out.

"Nobody should doubt the importance of speedily ending the Mau Mau terror, for which there can be no sympathy. But it is seriously questionable whether the Government's policy of fighting terror with terror is not responsible for exacerbating the situation. One result of its policy has been to drive many Kikuyu, who were forcibly removed from the White Highlands, into the Mau Mau gangs. The recent decisions to proscribe the Kenya African Union and to speed up the judicial system are ominous. Such methods are likely to perpetuate bitterness and leave no alternative to wholesale killing. They are unconvincing as a sensible way of dealing with the dangerously strained race relations which are Kenya's inescapable basic problem." This is the bloody story of civilization in action.

Now that the first phase is completed it is possible for the long established colonial prison system, which, before the N.K.V.D. appeared as slave specialists, practised the lucrative business of hiring out convicted Africans to Government and private development projects, to be extended and applied wherever and whenever the authorities desire.¹⁸ The thousands of Africans arrested since the emergency serving long term sentences of hard labour already form the nucleus of the future slave army the need for which is one of the reasons why the death sentence has been more "sparingly" used than white public opinion has demanded. The following reports show clearly what is being prepared for the "maladjusted."

"The Government is still anxiously studying the question of finding other areas of land for various categories of Kikuyu, including forest squatters, discharged farm workers, loyal tribesmen whose position has been prejudiced by co-operation with the authorities, and fanatical Mau Mau adherents, whom it would be undesirable to allow to return to the tribal reserve, at least for some time, and who at present are either serving gaol sentences or are under detention. The possibilities of employing some of these categories on development work in other forest areas, or on land clearance and rehabilitation, has been closely examined, together with related schemes such as the creation of new villages in which these people could begin rebuilding their lives and readjusting their minds, but it is not easy to find land for such settlements.

"There is empty land, but it is deficient in water supply, infested with tsetse fly, or climatically unsuited. There is also the viewpoint of other tribes to be considered; none of them is anxious to have Kikuyu settlements near them, or willing to allow Kikuyu to find work in their tribal reserves." (*Times* 6/3/53).

Mr. Lyttelton's "unholy union of dark and ancient superstition with the apparatus of modern gangsterism" looks very tame against scientific terrorizing and annihilation of the "enlightened civilisatory process".

A clear picture of fascism and its handmaid falsification,¹⁹ emerges from

¹⁸ " . . . prisoners contributed much to the building of roads and other public works by their *free* labour.

"The East African Railways and Harbours Administration reimbursed the Government to the extent of £13,178 in respect of convict labour employed in quarries and on reconstruction works." (Kenya, 1951, *ibid.*)

¹⁹ "Less than four hours after arriving in Kenya from South Africa, a middle-

this examination based on evidence drawn largely from the "reputable press", and we can on this basis come to certain definite conclusions.

Mau Mau, from being fiction, has turned into fact. When it first appeared in the headlines of the Western Press as a witchcraft cult whose aim was the destruction of all whites, it was nothing but Government propaganda. But after the initial shock of the emergency (October, November and December were comparatively "quiet months") and in the wake of its mounting brutality, the struggle for survival has taken the form of *localised* guerilla warfare. It is this wonderful heroic spirit which the press, using all the filthy tricks of its dirty trade, today calls Mau Mau.

Seen against this whole background, "*terrorism*" is the only means left to the African peoples and must therefore be given *unconditional support*. It is not as if these people have chosen this method when more "civilized" means were available, for their every attempt at reform along constitutional lines has been dismissed or gone unheeded by the guardians of "gradual self-government" in the interests of the Queen's peace.

The second Elizabethan age of piracy, plunder and slavery is ushered in with a vengeance which, for Africa, will make the first seem like child's play in comparison with this scientific barbarism; and not least among the new "pioneer captains" are the "revolutionaries" Messrs. Brockway and Hale who, irrespective of good intentions, by their political exploitation of the death struggle of a people, only further the bureaucratic ends of politicians, African quislings and the rest of the criminal scum who are the bright lights of the new era.*

We have so far examined the emergency as it affected the mass of the Kikuyu people. To this direct personal persecution must be added the destruction of the two spearheads of African national struggle, the Kenya African Union and the Kenya Independent Schools Association. Their destruction has, on the one hand deprived Africans of all legal means of struggle and on the other, enabled the Government to dispose of its main threat at the outset.

Like every spearhead of national struggle in modern history from the American War of Independence to the Irish Rebellion and the more recent example of Palestine, the Kenya African Union has been blackened by the oppressing power as an organization controlled by a handful of violent traitors who ensnare the mass of the people away from their real interests (always those of the imperial power) to further their own ends.

* We are shortly to publish a critical review of a resolution on national self-determination passed at a recent conference of the (so-called!) Congress of Peoples against Imperialism (27th September, 1953). From this it will be clear that this appraisal of the results of the political activities of Messrs. Brockway and Hale (and a host of kindred spirits in the Labour and Liberal parties) is literally no exaggeration.

aged Canadian motor-car agent, Mr. J. S. Richards, was tonight shot by African Mau Mau gangsters in Government Road, in the centre of Nairobi, and later died in hospital. An African police constable was shot dead in the same incident. *The murderers escaped in a taxi.* (*Times* 2/7/53.)

"First reports yesterday that Mr. J. S. Richards, managing director of the Ford Motor Company of South Africa, was shot dead in Government Road, in the centre of Nairobi, by terrorists are not borne out by police investigations. He was killed by an African police-constable using a police rifle, and the constable shot himself afterwards." (*Times* 3/7/53.) What happened to these "murderers" in the taxi?

To expose this deception and to show that the Kenya African Union was in the true sense of the word a democratic movement it is only necessary to quote once again our old unknowing "ally", the *Times* (17/7/52) on the aims of this organization. "Its declared objectives are to unite Africans into a single nation. To 'prepare to defend all Africans in Kenya, to fight for African interests in such matters as freedom of the press and social services, for freedom of speech, and for universal franchise. Politically it stands for the return to Africans of the lands in the area known as the "White Highlands" and for African self-government'." That these aims can be the programme of a political party is, in itself, an indictment of the much lauded impartial British justice. Attempts to right the many injustices suffered by the African people in Kenya have been the main work of this movement from its inception after the last war. Its members have sent petition after petition, delegation after delegation, to official quarters in Kenya, Britain and in desperation even to that cesspool of bureaucracy, the U.N.O., in *peaceful* attempts to redress the African wrongs and Kenyatta, its much maligned leader, even sat on Royal Commissions. As recently as March, 1952, two delegates from the Union, Messrs. Mbiyu Koinange and Achieng Oneko came to London with renewed attempts at land, educational and electoral reform, and were not even given the formality of a hearing, Whitehall's bureaucrats being otherwise engaged, no doubt in furthering their plans for Africa.

An indication of the growing strength of the K.A.U. was given when Jomo Kenyatta held a meeting in a rural area attended by about 50,000 Kikuyu which is reported to have shaken the authorities. The Government had to find some means of destroying this threat of rising nationalism. The invention of Mau Mau and the declaration of the emergency provided the opportunity and in November, under laws mentioned earlier, 106 of the K.A.U.'s most prominent members were arrested on *suspicion* and banished to the almost uninhabited Northern Provinces. In the meantime the K.A.U. continued to exist with Mathu and other spineless quislings as the new leaders of the African people, but even in this decimated form it was not allowed to function, and this cynical comment on the rôle of moderate African leaders (Government yes-men) became current, ". . . they have had their opportunity[!] and did not use it[!], and . . . now it is entirely up to the Government to deal with the situation". Reiterating the same theme Lord Milverton, speaking in the House of Lords enlarged upon the myth of trusteeship when he said that, ". . . the present emergency underlined only too clearly the dangers of giving responsibility, or encouraging the idea that responsibility should be given to Africans long before they were capable of receiving it or of undertaking its duties." (*Times*, 30/10/52). But as Mathu complained, the Government had placed them in political cold storage and as a member of the Legislative Council he could not even hold meetings in his own constituency without permission from the Government.

Later, Kenyatta and five other African leaders were brought to a trial which bore all the hallmarks of being rigged. "Impartial justice", with its paid informers and agents as witnesses for the Crown, had its way and Kenyatta was sentenced to seven years hard labour for managing Mau Mau, his five fellow-accused were given the same sentence for assisting in its

management. This could be the only decision of the court since the emergency was declared on the grounds that Mau Mau did exist, and had Kenyatta been acquitted, the Government would have stood exposed in the face of its lie. "On the question whether a Mau Mau society had been proved to exist, Mr. Thacker did not think the Court ought to disregard the order of the Governor in council which had found that there was such a society and that it was unlawful. It must be presumed that the Governor in council had sufficient reason to justify making the order.

"He did not think that the defence had seriously submitted that there was not a society known as Mau Mau. Throughout the case the evidence had gone to show that an organization known as Mau Mau had existed from 1949. He therefore found as a fact that during the material times there had been a society in existence which was unlawful, and had been declared to be unlawful by the Governor in council." (*Times* 9/4/53.)

On this presumption the "rule of law" was maintained or, as the *Times* puts it, "now the trial is ended, the verdict has been declared, and the sentence given out. There therefore exists judicial backing for the drastic administrative measures taken on the night 20th October." In other words, Mau Mau exists as a result of judicial backing and judicial backing exists because of Mau Mau. Maintaining the pretence of impartial justice, the judicial game continues. On 16th July, 1953, it was announced that the Kenya Supreme Court had quashed the convictions and sentences of Kenyatta and his five colleagues on a fine legal point. The contention of the defence counsel, Mr. D. N. Pritt, Q.C., that the magistrate had no jurisdiction to try the case at Kapenguria was upheld. Nevertheless, Kenyatta and his five fellow-accused are still detained in prison: this time the emergency regulations provide the excuse.

The connection between Mau Mau and the Kenya African Union established as a "judicial fact" it was only a matter of time before the Government "reluctantly" proscribed the Kenya African Union as a hotbed of Mau Mau. On 9th June, 1953, the *Times* reports that "A meeting of the Executive Council today proscribed the Kenya African Union as an unlawful society under the penal code. A notice was delivered to the union's headquarters in Nairobi and police searched the offices and removed all documents. The union's property has been vested in an officer appointed by the Governor.

"An official statement says there is no doubt that there are members of the union who have no connexion with Mau Mau, but the Government had satisfied itself that there is ample evidence to show that the K.A.U. has 'often been used as cover by the Mau Mau terrorist organization, and that before and after the emergency was declared there has been a connexion between members of the Kenya African Union and Mau Mau terrorists. Not only have a number of K.A.U. officials been deeply implicated in the organization of Mau Mau, but in many cases the local organizations of the two societies have been identical. It is significant that in 1948 the union adopted the technique of ritual oathtaking in order to bind members to secrecy.'

"Mr. Windley added that not all members of the union are bad, 'and we would not have wished to stop political associations with sincere aspirations for the legitimate development of African interests and progress, but

the Kenya Government can never again allow such an association as the Kenya African Union. Moreover, the Government cannot permit the formation of any African political societies on the same lines as the union while there is still such trouble in this country. We will, however, give assistance and recognition to those local associations which have been reasonable and sincere in the interests of their own people. Sensible people must reassert their strength so that African politics do not again become purely destructive.”²⁰

To the destruction of the Kenya African Union must be added the suppression of the Kenya Independent Schools Association and thus the shattering of both wings of the African national movement by the same red herring, Mau Mau. “The rapid spread of Mau Mau among the Kikuyu must to a large extent be attributed to the Kenya Independent Schools Association.” (*Times* 28/10/52). This movement, “a manifestation of the universal African urge for education” was built up and maintained by contributions from the Kikuyu and other African tribes in spite of Government and missionary opposition. It was managed by local committees who sent representatives to a central association supervised by a central

²⁰ “Loyal Kikuyu in the Aberdare constituency have formed an anti-Mau Mau organization called the ‘Torch-Bearers’ Society’. Applicants for membership have first to prove themselves, by deeds as well as words, to be opponents of the terrorist movement. There are at present nearly 70 members, all of whom wear a small metal badge bearing a cross, a sword, and a torch, and there are indications that more support will be forthcoming. The president of the society is Mr. Parminas Kerito, clerk to the African court at Naivasha, whose life has several times been threatened by Mau Mau. Branches are to be formed at Gilgil and Nakuru. The organization is approved by Mr. Humphrey Slade, the member of the Legislative Council for the Aberdares. (*Times* 2/5/53.)

“The Supreme Court at Nairobi was crowded with Africans yesterday and today when proceedings under a deportation ordinance began against Jesse Kariuki, said to be a travelling inspector of the Kenya African Union and an alleged high official of the proscribed Mau Mau.

“Most of the oral evidence has so far concerned statements said to have been made by Kariuki at various meetings. All the evidence concerning his alleged participation in *Mau Mau oath-taking ceremonies* was given in the form of affidavits submitted to the court by the Crown. Only brief summaries of the contents of certain sections of these affidavits were read in court. Names of deponents as well as dates and locations of incidents to which they referred in their affidavits were kept secret.” (*Times* 12/9/52.)

“The Government of Kenya issued the following statement today: — ‘As a result of information which has been received from absolutely trustworthy and reliable sources regarding Mr. F. W. Odede, M.L.C. [Member of the Legislative Council] in his purely individual and personal capacity, it has unfortunately been found necessary to make a detention order against him under the emergency regulations. He has, therefore, been arrested today and placed in detention. He will be suspended from his membership of the Legislative Council.

“Before taking this serious step, his Excellency the Governor has satisfied himself that Mr. Odede has been in touch with the Mau Mau movement and that he has been attempting to spread into Nyanza Province the violent methods adopted by the Mau Mau. Moreover, the information received shows he has threatened a number of loyal Africans with the same fate as has been suffered by some law-abiding Kikuyu. *For reasons of security, it is impossible to disclose the sources of this information.* It must again be emphasized that this action has been taken against Mr. Odede personally, because of his connexion with and advocacy of the violent attainment of certain objectives, and that it has not been taken on account of any political views he may hold or may express, or on account of his legitimate activities as a member of the Legislative Council or as a representative of the Africans of Nyanza.’” (*Times* 10/3/53.)

authority. This latter was under the leadership of Kenyatta until his arrest.

Since the emergency 34 K.I.S.A. schools have been proscribed while a further 150 have been warned that they will suffer the same fate unless they purge themselves of Mau Mau and come under the district educational board management within the next term. "About 21,000 children, or 19 per cent. of those attending schools in Kikuyu areas are affected." The Governor said that these schools took no external examination. Most of the teachers came from Githunguri, which was really only a secondary school.

"A great deal of evidence had come to light that they had been used for Mau Mau and were unsatisfactory from the educational point of view also. The Government had decided that the independent schools movement could not go on.

"The literature used in independent schools which your Correspondent has seen includes pamphlets giving prominence to land grievances and whipping up race hatred." (*Times* 15/11/52)."

What this correspondent fails to mention is that responsibility for land grievances and race hatred lies not with the Kikuyu but with the Government, for if the Government neither legalized land robbery nor passed racial laws and did not discriminate against African educational progress, neither the Kenya Independent Schools Association nor the Kenya African Union would exist for these problems were the *raison d'être* of their existence. No doubt the *Times* correspondent would like to see the Kenya Independent Schools' curriculum modelled on missionary lines where, besides learning the three r's, African children acquire a knowledge of the virtue of suffering for the benefit of the white man in this world to reap eternal happiness in the next where all men are equal in the sight of God.

There remains one last aspect of the emergency which must be briefly commented on, that is the position of the settlers and their efforts to attain

"Contradicting these figures is the following from the *Times* (2/5/53): "A government statement issued today says that 23,000 Kikuyu children, about 30 per cent. of the total in the Nyeri, Forthall, and Kiambu reserves are now away from school because of Mau Mau activities.

"The closing of over 100 independent schools has affected 13,000 children, and 10,000 others are denied the opportunity of education because terrorists have been intimidating their parents and the teachers. The statement says that there have been several attempts in Kikuyu areas and elsewhere to set up organizations with the intention of taking over the closed independent schools, but it has been made clear to the people concerned that the Government has no intention of allowing any of the schools to reopen under independent management."

"The education of the children of the richest people in the country is subsidized out of the taxes paid by the poorest, whose children get no education at all," asserts Dr. Norman Ley, a foremost authority on Kenya. European education is free and compulsory and is maintained at the cost of £26/7/6 for each white child as against 16/- for a black child.

"In the whole of Kenya, there are only 49 primary schools catering for about 5,500 children. Fourteen independent schools organized and maintained by Africans received no grants because they refused to accept European control.

"In the Rift Valley Province, where most of the Africans are squatters on European farms, there are no secondary schools and only about half a dozen elementary schools, all of which are run by missionaries. Most Africans are too poor to pay fees for their children. Thousands of African children who should be in school are working on the tea and coffee plantations. In the whole of Kenya there are only six secondary schools catering for Africans and only two provide courses up to the Cambridge School Certificate standard." (Padmore, *ibid.*)

a greater degree of self-government. What underlies their cry of "Kenya for the Kenyans" is not concern for the inhabitants of the country but precisely the opposite. Their hitherto constant, if not abundant, supply of cheap labour is now being threatened by the demands of the expanding industrial sector, i.e. Government-owned or Government-sponsored extractive and allied industries. "Each mass arrest of tribesmen will have the unfortunate side-effect of depriving farmers of essential coloured and native labour. This grave aspect was stressed to me many times . . ." (M. W. Batchelor, Chairman of Batchelor Peas Ltd. in a letter to the *Times* 20/12/52).

This cutting off of cheap labour is the crux of the conflict between the settlers and the British Government and one can therefore expect the "legitimate grievances" to follow more and more the pattern of chauvinistic white politics in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia which is characterized by the competition between agricultural and industrial interests (chiefly mining) for the limited supply of cheap black labour. Through the emergency the British Government has clearly gained the upper hand, talks on constitutional reform have been shelved to an indefinite future date and the chauvinists, with their eyes always fixed on consolidating immediate gains, have been easily trapped through manipulations at "a higher level" which used their prejudices to stall and control them as effectively as the British Government controls the "terrorist movement". Their wish to leave the emergency to the Government while they carried on the business of farming has fallen through and now under the compulsion of conscription the settlers are reluctantly shouldering part of the duties of suppressing Mau Mau. "General Erskine was asked today whether he had sufficient troops to deal with the Mau Mau terrorism and said: 'There is plenty of scope for the use of more troops. The urgent need is for more police, because I have too many battalions doing police duties of a protective kind instead of being in the forests seeking the gangs.' He said he was sure that the men of Kenya wanted to play their part to the maximum extent possible, and they were doing so in the Kenya Regiment and the police reserve. It would not be right to bring in British troops to relieve Kenya men of their *proper contribution*. Large numbers of British troops here were doing their two years' national service, and were not here just to relieve *Kenya men of similar obligation.*" (*Times* 8/8/53.)

The leaders of the Indian "community", licking the hand that whips them, blinded by their *parvenu* mentality of business at all costs, and following their beloved Nehru, have betrayed their people and sold them outright to the British. "Important decisions taken by the Government of Kenya should greatly please the Asian community.

"They meet in full measure the claim of Kenya's Asian leaders that their people be given the same opportunity as Europeans to participate fully in the requirements of the emergency. There are about 28,000 Asians of call-up age, but only a small proportion will be required. It was originally thought that the number of Asians required could be found on a voluntary basis, but the manner in which the emergency has developed made reassessment of the whole question necessary." (*Times* 23/5/53).

Mr. Turnbull, the member for defence has stated that: "As soon as the results of the Asian call-up were known, the question whether Europeans

could be replaced by Asians would be examined." (*Times* 25/7/53). In other words, the younger generation, unlike their "non-violent" (i.e. adapting) elders, are more and more identifying themselves with the African struggle, for they have come to realize that in Africa there is no halfway in the conflict of black versus white; so the old trick of divide and rule, used so effectively in India is again brought out to play its part and, through conscription, the British Government is hoping to precipitate a conflict between the Kikuyu and the Indians. Both the whites and the Indians must make no mistake, they are trapped whichever way they turn unless they support the African struggle. On the one hand, Britain, in attempting the totalitarian solution to her problem, has much more at stake in Kenya than the "trimmings" of food and cash-crop production; her "justice", proverbially blind when threatened, will take no heed of nice distinctions of colour. We have but to look to Russia, where everyone from the highest official to the slave-labourer faces the possibility of annihilation in the process of "solving" the totalitarian contradiction, for the terrible example of this warning. On the other hand, white rule in Africa is finished, its days are numbered, its strength, rapidly becoming chimerical, is to-day nothing but brute naked terrorism which calls into being a unity of African colonial peoples in a struggle never before seen and thus shows itself as desperate weakness. The slaves have had enough and from Tunis to the Cape are prepared to fight to the death, for in the abomination of white "civilization" life and death are the same to them. *Unless* the settlers of Kenya, and this applies to every European in Africa including the "native whites" (South Africa being no special case), throw in their lot with the Africans without superior rights of minority guarantees, they will meet the just vengeance of a long subjugated people.

PEDRO ALBIZU-CAMPOS: a note to our readers

In the two preceding numbers of *Contemporary Issues*, under the caption "ATTENTION", appeared the following statement: "WATCH WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO PEDRO ALBIZU-CAMPOS!" Campos, President of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, was confined in "La Princesa" prison, San Juan, Puerto Rico (a jail under the jurisdiction of the U.S. government) in November 1950.

In May of that year the Nationalist Party, through its Secretary of Foreign Relations, communicated to all Latin American governments confidential information received by the Party of a plot to liquidate the whole Nationalist Party. During June 1950, the Nationalist Party repeated its denunciation of this government plot. By October 1950 there had occurred the extraordinary events which culminated in Campos' imprisonment.

Government soldiers shot, killed and wounded scores of men throughout the island. The Nationalist Party resisted in self-defense. Over two thousand men, women and children were arrested in a sudden attack on the meeting places of the Party all over the island. Hundreds of men and women were convicted and imprisoned. Albizu-Campos was sentenced to a maximum term of seventy-nine years.

During Campos' imprisonment, which lasted almost three years, his physical condition deteriorated alarmingly. All the protests and petitions of his attorney Mr. Juan Hernandez Valle and friends in many countries of Latin America on his behalf went unheeded.

Campos had informed his attorney that he was being subjected to a scientific process which resulted in burns on his body, swelling of the joints and other abnormal physical manifestations.

During his last months in prison, no persons other than government or prison authorities were permitted to see him. His attorney could speak to him only through a thick screen which concealed his entire body, except his face. Campos was denied the right to see even his closest relatives and the right to associate freely with his fellow prisoners. For a period he was subjected to almost a starvation diet. Although there were more than 100 other political prisoners (Nationalists) at "La Princesa" jail similarly convicted for the events of October 1950, only Albizu-Campos had to endure all these restraints. The government gave indications that it was toying with the idea of committing him to an insane asylum.

All complaints about the cruel and inhuman treatment meted out to Albizu-Campos and the physical sufferings he was forced to endure, were ignored.

Then, like a bolt from the blue, a press dispatch of September 30, 1953, reported that the quisling Governor of Puerto Rico had "pardoned" the venerated Nationalist leader.

Governor Luis Munoz Marin supposedly acted on the advice of a four-man medical commission which declared Campos a "mental case suffering from a persecution mania". This subterfuge indulged in by the authorities bears a certain similarity to the technique employed against the German minister, Pastor Adalbert Knees, whose case was dealt with in earlier numbers of *Contemporary Issues* (See Vol. 2, No. 7, p. 244). But at least when Knees was released from prison, the British authorities did not question the sanity of this religious advocate of passive resistance to the occupation, as they had done when he was arrested. It was left to America, with its "advanced" jurisprudence which does not recognize the category of political prisoner, to resort to a base canard in order to furnish a "motive" for their "pardon" of the authentic leader of Puerto Rico's liberatory struggle.

Despite his release the editors of *Contemporary Issues* — with good reason — continue to repeat their warning: watch what will happen to Campos!

The allegation about Campos' insanity is totally without foundation. Of his *physical* degeneration however there can be no doubt: A highly competent doctor who diagnosed Campos after his release could not explain the cause of his swollen and badly burnt legs. Observers relate that towels soaked in ice water, wrung out and applied to his legs are hot within

fifteen minutes. Campos' present condition tends to confirm in general the charges made by the Nationalist Party concerning attempts to break him physically and mentally while he was incarcerated, even though some specific charges cannot be substantiated and others are open to question. Given America's record of terror in Puerto Rico — a situation we hope to describe in a future number of *Contemporary Issues* — the charges various prisoners have made are a logical step for a country like the U.S.A. which has initiated the process of transforming itself into a totalitarian state.

The Western world has become cognisant of the methods employed in Stalinist prisons — beatings, drugs, attrition, hypnotism, etc. — and to some extent with the brutality of European imperialist powers in Asia and Africa; but about the U.S. a myopic condition exists. One of the things which has made the Russian dictatorship more disgusting than the German, Italian or Spanish varieties is the method of labelling all opposition as "fascist". By casting aspersions on the mental soundness of political "criminals", America has moved in this respect lower than the Russians, who at least acknowledge *political* opposition.

One may properly ask, if American military occupation of Puerto Rico has been so benevolent, why in the recent plebiscite, held to determine the island's status, the *majority* of the people abstained from voting, despite strong governmental economic pressure upon them to participate. (This abstention is highly significant in Puerto Rico, for the outlawed Nationalist Party advocated not voting as a political act in the face of economic penalties for abstaining.) Add to the number of abstentions those who voted against the proposed incorporation of Puerto Rico as a U.S. commonwealth nation, a course of action urged by the Independence Party, and the total, an overwhelming majority of the islanders, signified their desire for independence. Nothing less than the immediate and unconditional independence of Puerto Rico fulfils the needs of the island's population, and securing the release of *all* political prisoners involved in the so-called "putsch" of 1950 is an important immediate practical step in this direction. If information about the conditions of politicals in Puerto Rican and U.S. prisons can be properly brought before the attention of the American public, pressure to help secure a general amnesty may result. The necessary first step in such a venture is to supplement the meagre material in English on Puerto Rico and to give it the widest circulation possible, for America's present conduct on the island might seem incredible without the recapitulation of its infamous record there. To this talk the editors of *Contemporary Issues* pledge their support.

Unfortunately, the Nationalist and Independence Parties by focusing their agitation and propaganda on Latin America, have been derelict in informing the American public of the real situation. With America's dominance in the world, not to mention the Western Hemisphere, and Puerto Rico's proximity to the U.S. as well as its relatively small population and resources, the hope for political liberation of this colony, unlike many colonial areas, lies predominantly in a progressive democratic development occurring within the United States.

If the present course of events continues, the fate of the island will be that of a largely depopulated area turned into a military base, with most

dark-skinned Puerto Ricans migrating to the United States, only to share *de facto* second-class citizenship rights with the American Negro.

Alan Dutscher

THE BOOK BUSINESS IN AMERICA

PART ONE

THE American book industry is facing a crisis. This is nothing new for a business which produces one of the most negligible commodities sold in the Land of the Beautiful. The only new element in the situation is the generally acknowledged fact that as a result of the present extremity it has become virtually impossible to publish a quality trade book.

The book has always been a marginal product in America largely because insofar as America does read it is pre-eminently the home of the cheap newspaper and magazine. Books, historically, have never been the profitable element for the army of manufacturers, publishers, writers, illustrators, wholesalers, and retailers economically involved in their existence in the United States. Rather they have figured either as an unremunerative sideline, or, conversely, they have been supported by other more lucrative activities engaged in by the adjutants of the aforementioned army. Thus American publishers prior to the twentieth century were able to put out books only because their revenues from the financially more important "ephemeral" material enabled them to do so; in recent years when the diversification of serial and book publishing has been established¹ the latter has become absolutely dependent for its continued existence upon subsidiary markets (book-clubs, reprints, serial pre- or republication, rentals, the cinema).

Unlike his European counterparts, the American bookman has struck no roots in the national soil. This alienation is reflected in many ways: "A Gallup poll published in February, 1950, reports: 'Despite our mass education and high degree of literacy, the United States has the lowest proportion of book readers of any major democracy, judging by the results of an international survey in six nations. England ranked highest in the study, with well over half of her adult population reading some book or novel at the time the survey was conducted. Norway came next, then Canada, then Australia, and Sweden, and the United States brought up the rear, with only one adult in five reading books.'"² Other reading studies

¹ There has been more than one important instance of their monopolistic reintegration recently, and this may indicate a future trend.

² Quoted from: *The Book in America; A History of the Making and Selling of Books in the United States*, by Helmut Lehmann-Haupt, in collaboration with Lawrence C. Wroth and Rollo G. Silver, 2nd edition, N. Y. Bowker, 1951.

have been conducted, which substantially demonstrate the functional illiteracy of Americans, insofar as books are concerned. The most comprehensive survey of all those made on the subject concluded that not more than twenty-five per cent of the population read books; magazines were read by fifty per cent, and newspapers by ninety per cent. It was the author's circumspect conviction that only one-half of the adults residing in the United States, had sufficient skill to read and understand the books published for them.¹

Both as cause and effect of the paucity of book readers, satisfactory distribution of books is drastically delimited, geographically. While it was normally customary to have a well-stocked bookstore in almost every European township of any consequence, this has never been the case in America. One competent observer reported on the state of the ordinary bookstore in 1931, in these terms: "The stocks of books are inadequate at almost every point except New York . . . The distribution system of the industry, as represented by its outlets is unsystematized, undeveloped, ineffective, unprofitable and static . . . Two-thirds of the counties of the United States and nearly one-half of the urban places between 5,000-100,000 population are without a book outlet worthy of the name . . . Over 33,000,000 people are without access to an adequate book outlet . . . Over fifty per cent of the people living in places from 10,000 to 25,000 are not served by such an outlet in their own communities, and constitute over fifty per cent in some of the best book states . . . The degree of over-concentration is even higher in larger cities — the forty-one cities of over 200,000 population having twenty-four per cent of the population and thirty per cent of the book outlets — and the highest degree of concentration being in the first three cities."² These figures have, to some extent, been brought up to date: In a regional breakdown of the percentage of twenty publishers' 1946 direct sales as correlated with the percentage of U.S. population estimated for the same year, it was demonstrated that 40.6 per cent of the population (living in the Southeastern and West Central regions) have only 22.3 per cent of sales (to bookstores and individuals, and not including wholesalers). At the same time 26.5 per cent of the population (living in the Northeastern region) have 42.4 per cent of sales.³ This enormous disproportion is perhaps more clearly shown by other regional figures reported for 1944, once again reflecting sales made to retailers and readers only: 22.2 per cent of total national sales were in New York State alone, while seventeen out of the remaining forty-seven states accounted for less than four per cent of the total books sold.⁴

As important as such figures are for indicating the poor condition of the book industry, they are perhaps even more important as an index to the cultural level of the nation which now assumes the "mantle of world leadership". Such phenomena as a country's unwillingness or inability to

¹ *The Geography of Reading: A Study of the Distribution and Status of Libraries in the United States*, by Louis Round Wilson, Chicago, American Library Association and University of Chicago Press, 1938.

² *Economic Survey of the Book Industry, 1930-1931*, by O. H. Cheney; with *1947-1948 Statistical Report*, N. Y., Bowker, 1931, Reprinted 1949.

³ *The Book Industry (A Report of the Public Library Inquiry)*, by William Miller, N. Y., Columbia University Press, 1949.

⁴ *A Banker Looks at Book Publishing*, by Charles F. Bound, N. Y., Bowker, 1950.

support cultural products, are never simply "accidental" — they are among the surest signs of that nation's lack of maturity and civilizatory progress. America's cultural barbarism is but a symptom of the general barbarism implicit (and becoming increasingly explicit) in her structure. Nor is the impact of these figures mitigated by the extent of public library development in the United States. For as Lehmann-Haupt has ingeniously suggested, the traditional cultural backwardness which has always found it so difficult to maintain the book industry on an economic basis, itself must account in large measure for the phenomenal growth of the tax supported library, which was, therefore, less an expression of educational yearning (the customary assumption) than of its direct opposite. That is, the real significance of the public library development in the United States is to be seen in the fact that America had to subsidize book outlets at a loss, at a time when the population of every other advanced nation in the world could profitably support them.

Though the subject is not our main concern, it might be noted in passing that libraries are far indeed from filling America's reading gap. It is estimated that more than one-third of the American population does not have access to libraries, and more than one-half of the libraries to which the American public does have access have very inadequate collections.¹ Perhaps the most devastating statistic relative to the true insignificance of the much-lauded public library is the following: About sixty per cent of all books loaned by the latter are borrowed by children and young people below voting age. In a word, like American education itself, the public library is largely a formal, compulsory (insofar as the use of the library by most school children is concerned), institutionalized affair that has no permanent and assuredly no positive effect on the national culture.

The central points this article will attempt to establish are: First, the wretched condition of the book industry, and second, the effects of these circumstances on the books themselves. In addressing ourselves to the former consideration it is possible to start at any step in the procedure, or any industry involved in the making or marketing of books. However, let us begin with publishing: "Despite nearly record sales the book industry is facing a crisis. Greatly increased costs for material and labor since the end of the war have virtually wiped out profit margins for publication of original trade books. According to an analysis appearing in the most recent statistical report (1947-1948): (A) Seven companies with annual volume in excess of two-and-a-half million [dollars — A.D.] showed operating profits before taxes averaging five per cent; (B) Five companies with gross sales between one and two-and-a-half million dollars had an average operating loss of three per cent before taxes; (C) Six companies, whose volume ranged from \$250,000 to \$1,000,000 for the year, showed an average operating loss before taxes of 3.4 per cent; (D) Nine companies with volume ranging from \$250,000 to \$10,000,000 showed an average operating loss before taxes averaging 20.1 per cent. These figures do not include 'other income' from subsidiary rights."² All but the last group

¹ In this connection it is interesting that library extension while a very worthy endeavour is characterized, all experts agree, by abysmal superficiality of titles supplied.

² Bound, op. cit.

made a small profit when income from subsidiary rights was included. Our source correctly adds therefore: "Thus we clearly see the serious situation facing the trade book publisher to-day as he is compelled to depend for his profits, if any, on the special income that comes to him from book-club adoptions, royalties from reprint houses and revenue from the sale of other subsidiary rights."⁹ The consequence of this dependence will be considered later.

The common plaint of publishers is that costs have risen enormously, e.g., the average increase of linotype composition between the years 1942-1947 was seventy-seven per cent, and of antique as well as coated paper, in the same period, forty-five per cent. It is generally recognized by the industry that the prices of books cannot be raised proportionately, though they have definitely increased, because the commodity sold, being so peripheral, can easily price itself out of the market entirely. There are, on the other hand, easily discernible limits to every single method but one of lowering the cost of production and only the one "way out" renders any efforts in this direction of appreciable value; for most books are already published in technically inferior bindings, with cheap paper, little or no margins (the libraries with their multiple circulation of books, and special rebinding problems are the first to suffer from these), inferior print, dearth of illustrative material, and considerably diminished in size.

The "one way out" is volume production; the publication of big editions and the concomitant discontinuance of publications likely to appeal to limited numbers of readers. That this is connected with the publishers' dependence on subsidiary markets which alone can effect the large-scale distribution that makes volume production possible should be obvious. Two well-known statements on this matter bear repetition: "The pricing policy which a majority of the leading trade book publishers seem to be following will be unsound unless they can maintain volume, avoid small printings which cost much more per unit than large ones, keep to a minimum the number of unprofitable books . . . What perhaps is most disturbing about the present situation is that it lessens the chances of really promising young writers to get a hearing and is likely to limit seriously the publication of important and useful books, books of cultural value . . . books that are unlikely to have large sales."¹⁰ The same year another authority wrote: ". . . the breakeven point for a publisher used to be 2,500 to 4,000 copies [of any new book printed — A.D.] now it is 10,000."¹¹ Note, the writer speaks of the break-even point, not of profit.

Having thus briefly indicated the problems of the publisher, let us next appraise those of the bookstore. The difference is somewhat akin to that between a localized and a metastasized cancer. Cheney reported the profits for an average bookstore with under a \$60,000 annual volume of business (in this category were — and are — subsumed the overwhelming number of such outlets) in the "prosperity year" 1929 to be minus 0.1 per cent, while the relatively poor store in the same classification made minus 6.9

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *The Crisis in Book Publishing*, by Alfred McIntyre, in *The Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1947.

¹¹ *Trade Winds*, by Bennett Cerf, in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, July 12, 1947.

per cent profit and the relatively good store had a profit of 5.9 per cent. He concluded that: "At least half the bookstores of the country are losing even in the best years, and the others are making too low a return for their efforts and hazards."¹² (This, of course, was no different from the situation in the retail field for any other commodity sold in the United States.) In another place Cheney estimated the proportion of America's dollar received by the auto industry to be 19 cents; by the candy-stores 1.4 cents, by the jewelry stores 1.1 cents, by the florists one-third of a cent, and by the bookstores of America — one fifth of a cent. More recently, Miller has noted that 32 per cent (by far the largest single group) of the member outlets belonging to the American Booksellers Association had a gross annual sale of under \$10,000, as of 1946. Most bookstores however, do not belong to the A.B.A. Concerning these, Miller wrote: "Yet most bookstores not A.B.A. members are very small. Were they included [in the above — A.D.], the most numerous group, doing less than a \$10,000 business a year, would be very much bigger."¹³

The reader may perhaps have some difficulty in understanding how a business which, except for its subsidiary elements, is so sickly, survives. Aside from the considerations (which will be dealt with more fully in a short while) that the industry is becoming highly monopolized and can thereby cushion itself somewhat at the expense of its weaker elements (the majority of people and firms in all parts of the business) as well as at the expense of the reading public, in terms of the quality of publication merchandised — it is also true that the very seriousness of the industry's illness has shielded it. Book manufacturers (binders, printers, etc.) are in so competitive a business and are themselves such marginal components of the system, that they have been known to carry publishers along on credit for great lengths of time, to grant them all kinds of privileges and favors in order to keep their business, and, more important, simply to keep alive a market for their services. The publishers, for their part, do the same for many of their failing book outlets and for a similar reason. Finally, it can hardly be wrong to conjecture that the banking houses that support the entire farrago (the great majority of houses in the trade are much too poor to depend on internal financing) also keep these weak firms alive out of necessity. That is, because they understand that without the bank's aid its potential customers would become insolvent, and a rigorous monopolization might be achieved which would no longer be dependent upon the banks for credit — being able to finance itself.

In any case, whether it is in spite of, or because of, or even if the banks in spite of themselves are partially responsible — the degree of concentration in the publishing industry is very high and growing increasingly so at a great pace. According to one estimate¹⁴ which appeared in the September,

¹² Cheney, *op. cit.*

¹³ Miller, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ It may as well be said here and now that in common with all small businesses, publishing cannot afford to thoroughly rationalize its accounting and statistical procedures, and this factor of expense more than all the raving about the "inefficiency" and "stupidity" of the little businessman by college professors, monopolists and bankers explains the failing. The point we are getting to is that *all* statistics of the book industry, including those we utilise, will be found wanting in some respects.

1947, issue of *Bookbinding and Book Production*: 31 publishers, less than 3 per cent of the total number in the United States, published more than 60 per cent of all books sold; 80 publishers, 7.4 per cent, put out 26 per cent of the total; 62 publishers, 5.7 per cent, released about 7 per cent; 181 publishehrs, 16.8 per cent, put out 5.4 per cent; and 726 publishers, 67.2 per cent, issued only 1 per cent.

There are other auguries of the same development: Miller quotes *The New York Times Book Review* of 19th December, 1948: "The new year will probably see a series of marriages in the trade, and perhaps on other grounds as well a decrease in the number of individual American publishers. It seems to be a fact that fewer substantial new publishing firms set up shop in 1948 than in any other recent year, and that conditions dictate further concentration rather than expansion." The larger publishers' reprint holdings reveal an identical tendency. Pocket Books are controlled by Simon and Schuster, both firms in turn, are owned by Field Enterprises Inc.; Doubleday's subsidiary Garden City Publishing Co., the largest hard-cover reprinter in the world, issues Blue Ribbon books, Sun Dial books, Star Dollar books, Permabooks, etc.; a syndicate including Little Brown, Random House, Harper's, Scribner, and Book Of The Month Club owns Grossett & Dunlap, one of the three largest (along with Garden City and the World Publishing Co., the latter firm having declined recently for easily understood reasons) in the hard-cover reprint line; Grossett & Dunlap and the Curtis Publishing Co., owners of the *Saturday Evening Post*, *The Ladies Home Journal*, *Holiday*, etc., own Bantam books; the Modern Library is controlled by Random House, *ad nauseam*. There are, in the reprint field, only two relatively small houses which are independents: Avon (it has policies and "literature" similar to the others and hence is worthy of no special attention) and The New American Library, which itself recently absorbed the American affiliate of the English reprint house of Penguin. The last is relatively unique insofar as its level is a few rungs higher than that of the others.

The independent bookstore, for its part, fights a losing battle against a host of monopolistic competitors. Among these are the book-clubs. Bound notes for example: ". . . The Book League of America now gives six free books to new members on joining. The Dollar Book Club currently gives its members sixteen free books plus a dictionary for a total expenditure of \$12, as compared with a cost of between \$48 and \$52 for exactly the same sixteen books if purchased in a retail book store . . ."¹⁶ Then there are also the department stores which in Cheney's day already accounted for almost 38 per cent of all bookstore sales, and which account for much more to-day. The traditional policy of these monster outfits has been to use books as loss-leaders (Cheney estimated that 40 to 70 per cent of all commodities sold in department stores were loss-leaders). Nor can unsubstantial "fair-trade" laws be expected to do more than temporarily curb this inevitable practice. So far as they are concerned it should be remembered that one department store giant alone, R. H. Macy, the most prominent violator of "fair-trade" laws, makes almost as much money in one year as the entire book industry combined. The plight of the book-store in more detail in other connections.

¹⁶ Bound, op. cit.

PART TWO

It is important to understand that all "solutions" to the problems of the industry that are confined by the limits generally imposed, can, in fact, only aggravate the chronic malaise. Even the extremity of vertical monopolization, long a unique feature of the house of Doubleday, raises new problems. The fact that the firm is in possession of its own manufactory means that it is confronted with yet another enormously expensive overhead charge which renders it imperative that the presses be kept running continuously if the business is to remain profitable. However, with the market for books as limited as it is in America, the condition of saturation is soon reached (as it has already been for several kinds of "literature", e.g., juveniles, reprints). When that condition is attained the surplus is either remaindered at fantastically low prices by special dealers (who are thereby competing with the publishers' list price items, and with the vulnerable bookseller in the bargain) or it may be pulped at tremendous losses (this is just one step removed from burning the books, non-politically inspired examples of which process we may someday be privileged to see). Doubleday has been able to use yet another expedient: the control of many book-clubs which it exercises enables the firm to get rid of its excess as "bonus" books and "dividends" to club members. However it requires no great imagination to see that this practice too has its limits.¹⁶

The consequences and conditions of volume will be seen if two subsidiary sources of publishers' income are examined in detail — the book-clubs and the reprinters. There are about 80 book-clubs in existence (the number is constantly changing) but of these perhaps three have developed "mass" markets.¹⁷ The biggest is — or was — the Literary Guild, closely followed by the Book Of The Month Club and the Dollar Book Club (the first and third are among many controlled by Doubleday). Because of its highly developed mail order business the book-club is able to guarantee both author and publisher¹⁸ a minimum sale of several hundred thousand copies of the book chosen. This may mean that the publisher will make \$100,000 or more (a big sum for a small business!) if only one title is selected by a club. Because of the enormous volume in which the book

¹⁶ That ingenious bookmen may not arrive at "more and better" answers cannot be categorically stated in advance. Accordingly, an extremely beneficial use to which many of the surplus literary masterpieces of our time were put was in the development of "shooters". To make a "shooter" one simply cuts a big hole out of the center of the book and inserts a coiled spring therein. When the unwary literateur opens his favorite *chef d'œuvre* imagine his delight as the spring hits him on his scholarly snout. And for all we can tell the jack-in-the-box is the source of less pain than the book would have been.

¹⁷ It is not commonly realized that despite innumerable "free offers", advertisements, "bargains", premiums and the miserable quality of titles sold — which is supposed to be an advantage — the entire "mass" market of the book-club has probably never exceeded three million.

¹⁸ It is worth noting that while most publishers' royalties to authors vary from 10 to 15 per cent of receipts on the first 2500 to 5000 copies of a book sold, and are slightly pro-rated with increased sales, when a book is selected by a club receipts from the latter are equally divided between author and publisher. With some percentage variation this situation obtains for all subsidiary rights — hence publishers need hardly coerce authors into writing the kind of trash chosen by subsidiaries.

clubs deal they are the first segment of the industry under discussion which do show handsome profits.¹⁹ Bound writes: ". . . properly run, the book-club business can be extremely profitable. According to a prospectus of the Book Of The Month dated 20th March, 1947, in connection with the sale of capital stock, the company showed, in round numbers, for the years ending 31st December, 1944, 1945, and 1946, gross sales (less returns) respectively of \$12,796,000, \$13,551,000 and \$18,190,000 with net profit after taxes for these years of \$758,000, \$759,000 and \$1,346,000 . . . Figures given in confidence, which therefore cannot be revealed, show that other book-clubs have done as well or better in 1947 and 1948. Totalling some of these figures we find a combined gross sale of \$10,000,000 produced a net profit before taxes in excess of \$2,500,000."

The publishers make money, the book-clubs make money — on the surface everything (forgetting the bookseller and the kind of book sold) seems to be lovely. Nevertheless a few troublesome reflections irritate even the denizens of this fair elysium: Publishers complain that though the club sells a few books in great numbers those selected constitute only an infinitesimal proportion of all titles issued — and here is the rub — the remainder and greatest portion of the publisher's list (the part sold by him directly and hence the part from which he obtains a greater percentage of profit per book sold than the club can give him) must suffer in consequence. For all the blare of publicity and the grease of promotion is used up on the book-club selections, from the sales of which the bulk of the publisher's revenue is not derived. An added feature of the same difficulty is the fact that the publishers must compete wildly for the chance to have a book or books of theirs so chosen. Hence they all try to turn out the same kind of best-seller trash and this lack of variety produces great masses of books which duplicate each other and more easily become drugs on the market. More important the publisher's dependence upon the book-clubs and other subsidiaries forces them to issue ever greater numbers of books on the chance that the more titles they put out the better the opportunity to have a club selection among them — though conversely also the better the chance to make a loss on the total annual business. As the title volume swells it works against each individual title by "A. Cutting down its share of available publishing attention. B. Reducing its share of promotion effort. C. Reducing its share of selling effort by publisher, traveler, bookseller, and clerk. D. Crowding dealer's stocks. E. Reducing the effectiveness of criticism. F. Increasing production costs. G. Increasing the hazards and losses for every branch of the industry."²⁰ The bookseller too, who, we should remember, never had a membership card to Elysium, complains that as practically all publicity is given to club selections (only the clubs are rich enough to spend the really big sums required for effective advertising campaigns, and naturally they will spend such money on their own books), the only kind of books that people know about and ask for are these same items, which the bookstore is hardly in a decent competitive position to sell inasmuch as they can be offered at far cheaper rates by the clubs.

¹⁹ It should be clear that only the leading ones are meant. It is probably fair to say that three-quarters of all book-clubs are marginal outfits, not much better off than the average publisher.

²⁰ Cheney, op. cit.

The latter retort that they benefit the whole industry because they have introduced the habit of reading books to large numbers of new people and further because, given the enormous turnover in club membership, it is not too much to assume that ex-clubbers constitute a potential new market for books which offers great possibilities to both publishers and bookseller. Despite the noble *pronunciamientos* of these "educators", regional statistical breakdowns of book-club membership refute the first claim by revealing the usual disproportions: Book-club membership in the Northeastern area is extremely high while membership in the Southeastern and West Central region is much lower. It is easily seen therefore that the book-clubs are really gaining members among people who already have the facilities for the purchase, loan, or rental of such works. Upon analysis the "introduction to reading" argument turns out to be simply a smokescreen for the destruction of the retail book business. As for the potential market of ex-members, Miller writes that the largest group of such fortunate people is assumed by persons in the trade to be composed of those unable any longer to afford four books a year, irrespective of the number of others offered free.

The only sense in which the reprint business differs from the book-club *geschäft* is that the books chosen by the former are, if this is at all conceivable, generally even more inferior.²¹ Again the secret of "success" is volume. The average print order for a reprint is 250,000 copies . . . it is uneconomical to print less than 150,000 and it often takes more to break even. The reprint business basically constitutes an attempt to capture the more lucrative magazine market for books by using magazine methods and magazine "literature". Distribution is effected through periodical wholesalers who in turn load drug, candy, chain, stationery and other stores with the books. Discounting and pricing is similar to that of magazines. This happy scene is punctuated by occasional views of the mortal struggle between hard-cover reprinters and their soft-cover counterparts. While the latter are definitely winning, life is by no means so rosy, even for them: In 1946 overproduction of this trash reached such heights that 15,000,000 pocket books had to be called in. On the other side, original publishers, who are so dependent on their reprint subsidiaries, are slowly being strangled to death by their competition. It has come to a point where reprinters are selling originals and original publishers are selling "reprints".²² The same process of strangulation is taking place in the area of bookselling, since the ordinary book outlet must now compete with everything from delicatessens to whore houses. As a by-product of this development the outlet becomes increasingly less a bookstore and more of a five-and-dime affair for the sale of notions, toys, greeting cards and perhaps, as the bookmen awaken to wider and wider possibilities, suppositories and condoms. Correspondingly as less and less attention is devoted

²¹ In 1945 over 50 per cent of all reprint titles were "mystery stories". As if to testify to the intellectual growth taking place in America, three years later only about 25 per cent were mysteries, while proudly seated on the curve of literary ascendancy were "Westerns" and "sex".

²² That is, the idiotic books manufactured for reprinters are submitted by them to regular houses for original publication in order to give such books the necessary veneer of respectability and prestige that comes with hard-cover publication. The publishers are forced to agree to this arrangement otherwise they forfeit subsidiary royalties.

to the selling of books, in these places, less and less books will be sold, and there will be fewer bookstores, as the term is usually understood.

To confirm the thesis that subsidiary publishing constitutes no economic salvation, it should be made clear that the subsidiaries bring pressure to bear for the creation of not merely more and more books, but — even in the case of reprinters — for new titles. The Brobdignagian proportions of such an output must crush its producers underfoot. The reprinters like the book-clubs contribute to the demand for more books, the principle of their distribution system being continual replacement of slow-sellers. This must be so as the profit per item is extremely low.²³ In addition the obligatory policy of full credit for unsold copies (obligatory, because that is the only way in which a drug-store can be induced to give up valuable space to so valueless a commodity as a book) is an omnipresent worry, and finally, the reprinters are faced with the virtual impossibility of raising prices, because their books are competing in price not with other books but with newspapers, magazines, aspirins, cigarettes, laxatives, etc. Thus, perpetual replacement necessitates perpetual production, and it comes as no surprise that perhaps 20 per cent of the reprinters' lists are not reprints — but originals. What the continuation of this trend must eventually mean to publisher's subsidiary rights, to the quality of books in general, considering the kind of literature marketed by reprinters, and to publishers once more, in terms of direct competition in the issuance of originals, is obvious.

This leads once more into the question of the industry's reliance on ever new titles. Cheney has been quoted as to a number of unavoidable consequences of this policy. There are others: The geometric increase in the publication of new titles and the promotion given them inevitably cuts down the sale of back-list items — and yet nothing can be more irrational — even in terms of the irrational god Profit: It is crystal-clear that the surest way to reduce publishing overheads and make a sizeable return is to reprint and sell older items whose costs of production have already been recovered. But instead new books are continually appearing, to the point where no bookstore, irrespective of size, can possibly stock (even if it wanted to) all the books of any one major publisher. Again let us quote Cheney for the proper *dénouement*: "The climax is attained by the travelers [publishers'] agents who sell to retailers — A.D.] who have developed the pet "plug" principle — getting the good-will of the bookseller by dissuading him from buying any copies of some particular title [which he was hired by the publisher to sell to the retailer — A.D.]. This is simply carrying to an extreme the necessity for discrimination against titles and neglecting them in order to pay some attention to the others. Everybody in the industry has to have his pet plugs — the competition is such that there cannot be pets without pet plugs." Yet in all honesty it cannot be said that overproduction is the villain in the piece — as though it is something that could be avoided by the book business, were it wiser. Nor is underconsumption avoidable either for it is the basic precondition of any system of exploitation. *Insofar as this drama is enacted on*

²³ Bound's estimates for 25 cent reprints are as follows: The outlet pays 19 cents to the wholesaler, who returns 15½ cents to the publisher. However, the cost of production per copy is 10½ to 12½ cents and what remains to the publisher is between 2½ and 5 cents per copy, to cover cost of distribution, for reserves against returns — a very serious problem indeed — and for net profit.

the capitalist stage it is a tragedy in the classical sense, that is, there are no alternatives to ruin. For the present crisis of the industry consists in the undeniable fact that because of rising costs it is absolutely dependent for its very life upon volume production. But given the inevitable limitations of the American market volume production is synonymous with over-production.

So far we have considered the conditions and consequent effects of the present situation on the economics of the book industry. We will now examine the effect of these same circumstances on the books themselves. It requires little documentation to establish the low quality of contemporary literature. It may be said that in one fashion or another virtually everyone who reads books, regardless of how remote his connection with the industry might be, realizes consciously, at one time or another, that the overwhelming mass of books published in America are simply — crap. There are innumerable pet theories which attempt to establish the reasons for this state, and practically all partake, in some measure, of the truth. In a word, it is true that the critics are to blame, as are the authors, the publishers, the booksellers, *ad infinitum*. The only thing to be added to the unerring collective consciousness that something is wrong with the books put out to-day is the conviction that the rottenness permeates *every* area of the book field and is the necessary result of the overall system. To explain the phenomenon thoroughly would involve a cultural history of our era. This much however can be said, generally: Ideology (a category which includes all literature) insofar as it is great can only reflect reality, insofar as it is inferior can only distort it. However, the reflection of reality, which is truth, is impossible under a system a precondition for whose existence is precisely the distortion of truth. When capitalism was still, qualitatively considered, progressive it could afford to be honest with and about itself; when it exhausted its progressive possibilities and in fact became retrogressive the truth became not merely a luxury, but the greatest menace to the system, and lying or evasion (which is a form of lying) became the only legitimate forms for literature. Thus, inferiority of production is not an abnormality of contemporary literature but is its function, and lies, evasions, and inconsequentiality are not the contingent results of this same literature but are rather what is required of it under the division of labor.

So we find that 100 years ago the works of Dickens, Thackeray, Cooper, the Bröntes, etc., were among the best-sellers in America. To-day the situation has been reversed with a vengeance. In fact literature has sunk so low in the last decade that it is now the fashion of a considerable section of the literati to look back with nostalgic longing upon the 1930's as a "golden age" of American art and thought. That the latter period was superior to our own we will not argue; however, as a reflection of what the present period must be like if the 1930's are to be called a golden age in comparison, we reproduce a list of the best-sellers in the United States in the "golden age".²⁴

²⁴ Taken from: *Golden Multitudes; the Story of Best Sellers in the United States*, by Frank Luther Mott, N. Y., Macmillan, 1947. Prof. Mott classifies as best-sellers those books believed to have a total sale equal to one per cent of the population of the continental United States for the decade in which they were published. The required sale for the period 1930-1939 was 1,200,000.

- 1931 Buck, Pearl: *The Good Earth*.
 1931 Queen, Ellery: *The Dutch Shoe Mystery*.
 1932 Queen, Ellery: *The Egyptian Cross Mystery*.
 1933 Allen, Hervey: *Anthony Adverse*.
 1933 Gardner, Erle Stanley: *The Case of the Sulky Girl*. (All Gardner's books are mysteries.)
 1933 Hilton, James: *Lost Horizon*.
 1934 Gardner, Erle Stanley: *The Case of the Curious Bride*.
 1934 Queen, Ellery: *The Chinese Orange Mystery*.
 1935 Gardner, Erle Stanley: *The Case of the Counterfeit Eye*.
 1936 Carnegie, Dale: *How To Win Friends and Influence People*.
 1936 Gardner, Erle Stanley: *The Case of the Stuttering Bishop*.
 1936 Mitchell, Margaret: *Gone With the Wind*.
 1937 Gardner, Erle Stanley: *The Case of the Dangerous Dowager*.
 1937 Gardner, Erle Stanley: *The Case of the Lame Canary*.
 1938 Brand, Max: *Singing Guns*.
 1938 Gardner, Erle Stanley: *The Case of the Substitute Face*.
 1938 Page, Marco: *Fast Company*. (Mystery.)
 1938 Runyon, Damon: *The Best of Damon Runyon*.
 1939 Steinbeck, John: *The Grapes of Wrath*.

That mysteries have to-day disappeared, to some extent, from best-seller lists is no sign of progress. An article in *The New York Times Book Review* of 16th January, 1949, suggests: ". . . the uncomfortable thought that those who hope to qualify as No. 1 popular novelist had better follow the formula. There have been few violations of the formula during the last 15 years. *Grapes of Wrath* (1939) was one, *Strange Fruit* (1944) was another. On the other hand, the list includes *Anthony Adverse* (1933, 1934), *Gone With the Wind* (1936, 1937), *Forever Amber* (1945), *The King's General* (1946), and *Green Light* (1935). *The Keys of the Kingdom* (1941), *The Song of Bernadette* (1942), *The Robe* (1943), and *The Miracle of the Bells* (1947). The formula in short: (1) operate within a historical, costumed setting or (2) develop a devotional theme." As for non-fiction, *The New York Herald Tribune*, 24th October, 1948, notes: "For a generation or more, leading non-fiction best-sellers have been pretty much of a piece: self-help, popularized religion, more self-help. The only important variation came via certain topical pieces during the war."

To prove the contention that rottenness permeates every area of book production and renders bad work inevitable it is necessary to examine, in some detail, each major agent involved in the fabrication and diffusion of literature. Accordingly, we begin with the writer. And to guide us we have one of the professional breed.* Our quotation is taken from a discussion he gave before other men economically involved in literary production, and is thus characterized by a certain *degree* of frankness. Mr. Davis speaks of the professional author, and in particular of the case ". . . which unfortunately is far too common in this country . . . that of the man who has something to say, but not much. He says it, he acquires a certain degree of renown, or at least notoriety; he may even make some money out of it; if he has a fairly sustained capacity for production he becomes a professional

* *Some Aspects of the Economics of Authorship*, by Elmer Davis. The Bowker Lectures on Book Publishing; Second Series, N. Y., The Typophiles, 1945.

writer — and all at once he discovers that he has nothing more to say, that he said it all in his first two or three books; but he is still a professional writer, with a family which has to be supported somehow, and which can perhaps be more easily and comfortably supported by the tricks which the professional writer has mastered than in any other way. This all too common situation has had a serious effect on the content and quality of American writing." In another place, Mr. Davis says, in the same strain: "Which brings us to by far the commonest type, the author who makes a living by his trade; and who usually finds after a few years that he must make a choice between quantity and quality, or — more deplorably still — that there is no choice, that quantity is all he is any longer capable of producing . . . it cannot be disputed that the conditions of the industry to-day do encourage an enormous overproduction, do make it practically impossible for a writer to retire into dignified silence when he has said all he has to say, or to lie fallow for a while if he is going through a period of sterility." Mr. Davis speaks now of the author's connection with the magazine industry, but since virtually the same conditions obtain, in this regard, for the book industry it is valuable to quote him: "At any rate starvation in a garret is no longer a problem for any writer who can meet the somewhat peculiar but not too rigidly specialized standards of the magazine market . . . and . . . magazine editors are expecting him to produce at the same old rate. For what the magazine editor wants is something that will build up, or keep up, the circulation; and well-known names, well-known to the readers of that magazine as well as to the general public, are the thing that is most likely to do it. Accordingly, if you sell any given magazine ten stories in a year, you will get more for each story than if you sold them only three stories a year. It may well be that three stories, three good stories, are all you have in you that year; but if your production falls off your price is likely, sooner or later, to fall off, too. So you write your three good stories; and then you use the tricks of the trade that you have learned and your knowledge of the tastes of the editors of that particular magazine to knock off seven more stories that are good enough — good enough to sell with the advantage of a name well known to the magazine's readers, even though they might be sent back if they came up from Joe Blotz of Podunk Corners."

Still further on Mr. Davis touches upon the same problem from a somewhat different angle. He speaks of ". . . the problem of the promoted book . . . sometimes the publisher has the idea, sometimes the agent . . . [a particular publisher — A.D.] in the discussion . . . already cited, observes that a really successful author *seldom* [italics ours — A.D.] has time to write a book he wants to write, for the chances are that he is already under contract to write two or three books that his agent has thought of and wants him to write . . ."

If it were only a question of the agent and publisher dictating the content of books, perhaps even so, the modern literary sense would not be as arid as it is. However there are others as well. Direct and indirect coercion are exercised by the subsidiaries upon authors and publishers. Of the direct variety we have already seen one instance, that of the reprinters who have their trash pre-issued by original publishers for prestige and advertising reasons. Movie companies too, because of their great wealth,

can often force (the more exact word is bribe) the publication of the scripts of their idiotic scenarios, for reasons similar to those of the reprinter. Direct coercion may express itself also in compelling the author to make changes in his manuscript, in order to render the book palatable to the subsidiaries. A dramatic instance of what is involved obtruded on public consciousness a few years ago, when the novel *Raintree County*, by Ross Lockridge was awarded the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer movie company novel prize. This work was shortly after adopted by the Book Of The Month Club. Determined to make it conform to best-seller requirements, both agencies pressured the author into cutting the book's length, deleting "objectionable" material, etc. Dorothy Canfield Fisher, one of the BOMC judges, said: "Lockridge's reaction to suggestions from the Committee of Selection of the Book Of The Month Club was mature, not self-willed, not stubborn, very reasonable and intelligent, rather unusual with a young and untried author."* Lockridge subsequently committed suicide.

Indirect coercion, however, has even greater weight, and this results from the fact that original houses have to rely on subsidiary publishers for part of their profit, which compels them often to issue the kind of book that has a chance to compete for subsidiary rights. What kind of book does the club want? Miller quotes from the formula developed by one big book club (People's Book Club, which advertised the following statement on the back of the Sears & Roebuck — the owners of this club — 1948 Spring and Summer Catalogue): "The standards by which our editors and critics judge literature contain this one very vital *must*: The books must be readable by every member of the family. They must be *family books* . . . So, if you like to read without blushing, without tearing pages out (a favorite American pastime — A.D.) before passing the books on to younger members of your household, we invite you . . . to read about the advantages you will enjoy as a member of the People's Book Club."

The Book Of The Month Club, on the other hand, prides itself on the fact that the tomes it offers are selected by a board of prominent literary critics and writers, and hence are, presumably, the cream of the country's authorial output. Nonetheless when one of these Solons was asked by an outside source to name the books published that year which she considered the best, or liked the most, only one of the seventeen titles she had chosen for the BOMC appeared on her tally; in the case of another of the judges not a single one of his BOMC selections were so listed."

Those who still cherish traditional, but completely unrealistic pictures of the writer's functions and methods will be further disillusioned to learn of yet another technique employed to make books successful. This ingenious idea utilizes the polling craft to help write best-sellers. It works as follows: Plots are boiled down to bare essentials, records are made of them and played in various cities to groups of people who ". . . first munch refreshments, and then all sit down together to hear the boiled-down book read, and record their impressions throughout (from "superior" to "bad") on an

* Ross Lockridge, Jr. — *Escape from Main Street*, by Nanette Kutner, in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, June 12, 1948.

* Miller, op. cit. BOMC pays its judges on a profit-sharing basis, thereby "possibly" inducing them to forego whatever standards they may have in order to select books of best-seller "quality".

electronic gadget called Teldox. When it's all over, a composite graph indicates the weak spots in the story and the author is called in to make repairs. Whatever survives these sivings through the mass mind . . . is a story that's sure to sell."* Among those authors mentioned as users of this technique are Sterling North and James Burnham.

There is still another "scientific" technique long employed by American magazines and rapidly making headway in the book industry. This "science" mathematically grades all manner of reading material (by the number of syllables per word, the number of words per sentence, the number of sentences per paragraph, the number of "personal" words employed, etc.) and attempts to reduce natural linguistic richness to the lowest common denominator, by restricting the usage of "big" words, complex sentence structure, generalization and so forth. Such nonsense is far more serious than it sounds, for linguistic complexity is often the necessary garb of theoretical richness and to legislate the emasculation of form is inevitably to abridge the possibilities for thought itself. However widely used the technique is less dangerous than the intellectual matrix which provided the generative elements for its formulation. The point is that thought and art have already become so moronized by their massification that irrespective of the formal adoption of any such devices the state of letters already mirrors the state of mind that gave birth to these bright ideas.

Having glimpsed something of the obstacles that stand in the author's way, should he wish to produce a good book, let us make the (increasingly metaphysical) assumption that somehow such a book does get written and reaches the publisher's desk. What kind of man is the publisher? Is he able to recognize good literature? Will he make personal, dare we say monetary, sacrifices to see that the book is issued? Banker Bound gives us this encouraging answer: "In the past it was customary for the publishing house to be dominated by an individual who was primarily interested in the literary aspects of the business [how criminal! — A.D.] . . . to-day the trend is towards including in top management experienced business men [hurrah! PROGRESS at last! — A.D.] . . . Frequently these are individuals with accounting or financial background." To be sure, this is just the sort of person needed to improve the quality of American literature.

Though the above may be a new reason for the contemporary publication of inferior literature, it does not explain the bad publishing record of the past fifty or sixty years. This is undoubtedly due to the historico-congenital weakness of American publishing which prevented it from ever achieving anything more than the most rudimentary specialization. Except for legal, medical, and, to some extent, textbook literature the publishers of the United States were never able to specialize, and thereby develop critical standards for the acceptance of manuscripts. This came about because the market for the literature of any particular field was extremely limited, and publishers were thus forced to print any and all kinds of stuff, in order to survive. Here a comparison might profitably be made to pre-war German publishing, which had a long tradition of specialization and high critical standards, and was thereby enabled to issue a literature of unparalleled quality in, for example, the scientific and technical fields.

* Ibid.

(Parenthetically, it might be noted at this point that the German technical books industry was a casualty of the second World War, a place which has never since been filled.) The presence or absence, quality or inferiority of the technical book is, in itself, a valuable indicator of conditions in the book field generally. By its very nature the technical work can depend far less on ballyhoo for sales appeal — it usually makes its way only if genuinely useful. This type of book may be thought of as setting a standard for all of book production. In this light we should consider the circumstance that technical-scientific publishing in the United States is very largely the creation of little more than a decade. It was the second World War and the dismal prospect of no longer being able to rely on the German literature which forced America to create a technical books industry, the previous deficiencies in which had found their reflex in the state of the sciences at the time. Thus one authority said: "I am reliably informed that when we [the U.S.A. — A.D.] entered the war the German Army had fourteen men per hundred concerned with radio communication; the British six to eight; and the United States approximately two and one half."¹⁰ Nor must it be assumed that because war created the industry — and keeps it going to-day — there are no longer any problems. It is true that the technical book business has now assumed huge dimensions — as everything does in America — but, again like everything else in America, it is qualitatively inferior — certainly to the pre-war German trade.

Considering our obstinate fondness for metaphysical speculation, perhaps we will be indulged yet another fancy, namely, that despite current literary and publishing infelicity, an excellent work has been written and actually published. What then? The "life expectancy" of the average book is measured in terms of a few short weeks. That an early death is desirable for most books published to-day is not to be questioned. Unfortunately, this matter of "getting lost in the shuffle" affects the occasional good book as well. Works that do not quickly "catch on" are quickly replaced, and are soon permitted to go out of print. The business of "catching on" may be likened to an osmotic movement — it is a question of absorption through innumerable cells of public opinion, and the better the book is the longer it takes for it to find its audience, for the simple reason that the audience for good books is an extremely limited one at this time. From this standpoint the central importance of the literary critic, who constitutes the first and most important agent of the molecular process, and who is the winnower of a huge, amorphous mass of literary material, must be adjudged. Given the enormous, unending flow of bad and indifferent books it is practically impossible for the ordinary person to find decent reading material and it may therefore almost be said that the chief function of modern criticism should be to discover and lend a helping hand to the worthwhile book. Criticism goes much further in this direction, however, for it is endowed with the charity of sweet Jesus himself. Put another way the statement would read: the literary critics are indistinguishable from the writers of advertising copy. That this is more than a superficial impression has been proven on at least two separate occasions: In a compilation of reviews appearing in some 50 metropolitan newspapers and literary

¹⁰ *The Technical Book Publisher in Wartimes*, by James S. Thompson, in *The Bowker Lectures on Book Publishing*, Second Series, N. Y., Typophiles, 1945.

periodicals in one year, a writer found that 137 novels had, during that time been hailed as "the best novel of the year", while 27 biographies were similarly endorsed.²⁰ In the second case 1,733 books were criticized in 8,086 reviews appearing in 67 publications. Of this total of 1,733 books reviewed, 787 received definite and unqualified reactions, as follows: 726 were favorably and only 31 were unfavorably reviewed.²¹ That is the exact measure of modern criticism — only 31 books out of 1,733 were unfavorably reviewed.²²

Once more it may be said that everybody and their mothers-in-law have theories on the reasons for this, and again, virtually everyone has seized upon some aspect of the truth. Thus, the allegation that the only books that get reviewed in the literary periodicals are those which are advertised therein and the corresponding imputation that periodicals don't like to pan products that advertise in their pages are in large measure (and that is the only measure with which we are concerned) correct. To avoid any accusations of misanthropy we will even admit that it is not all a question of dishonesty, by any means. For it cannot be denied that critical standards, which are, in the last analysis, derived from the works criticized, are lacking. Moreover it can easily be understood that criticism is overwhelmed by the quantities of raw material placed on its altars, as well as by the tremendous limitations of time, space and "propriety".

If the initial step in the circulation process is so disappointing can anything be said for the final step — the book outlet itself? With great expectations we shall first examine that outlet which, while not of major importance, is ordinarily thought of as the most favorable for quality books — the public library. The first question is: What are the libraries' book selection policies? Miller answers this when he writes of ". . . the libraries . . . tendency to buy and circulate the most popular books. Best sellers, whether purchased from local dealers, wholesalers, or publishers, have usually been most in demand by adult and adolescent card holders and most generously supplied by the libraries. *Indeed, many public libraries select their adult books from best seller lists or from advertisements and reviews featuring candidates for such lists*" (italics ours). This is the result of (among other things) the training and background of that peculiarly American product, the professional librarian. Until recently (America's ideological Coca-colonization of the world forces the qualification) Europe rarely knew of the existence of such creatures. The librarian there was simply a subject specialist who happened to work in a library rather than a "trained librarian". In consequence of the American system librarians know nothing of the literature of any field — they are not bookmen — at best they have technical proficiency (though why advanced university degrees are required to impart this proficiency is a deep mystery inasmuch as it is either simple enough to be learned quickly on the job, or non-transferable as between libraries). Given the librarian's ignorance of

²⁰ *A Critique of Criticism*, by Louis Bromfield, in *The Mirrors of the Year*, N. Y., Stokes, 1928.

²¹ Cheney, op. cit.

²² As for the books unfavorably reviewed where personal clashes were not involved it can be said that this is the "pet plug" principle in operation once again. For given the limitations of the market and the over production of books — at least some must be panned so that the others may sell.

subject-matter we are not surprised to find such comments as this one by Cheney: "Each year the publishers issue hundreds of non-fiction titles which they believe to be of significance and which they feel sure will be in enough demand from the libraries to make publication safe from danger of loss. Each year the publishers realize disappointment — and the result is that some excellent works are discouraged and the public is deprived of them . . .", or another observation by Miller: "Juveniles account for 30 to 40 per cent of many libraries' total annual expenditure for books. Some libraries part of or closely associated with school systems, spend 60 to 70 per cent of their entire book budgets on juveniles. On technical and professional books most libraries spend nothing, and few spend more than 10 per cent of their book funds."

Libraries however, are not the major agents for the dissemination of books. This function falls to the lot of the varied retail outlets. There can be no doubt that insofar as the latter are concerned, the quality publication has, if anything, less of a chance of being selected, or if that should by chance occur, of remaining in stock, than it would have in the libraries, and this for a number of reasons: First because of the already sufficiently delineated pickle which these shops are in. Quick sale or no sale, the traditional policy of the drug-store type of outlet, and of the department store has perforce become the nostrum for all outlets. Needless to say excellent books, like most distinctive things, require some time to establish themselves — for the aforementioned molecular process to take effect. Under the present conditions it is highly improbable that they can do so. Secondly, because of the "star system" of book promotion which centers all advertising, critical attention, and salesmanship on book-club selections and their ilk. (That *all* elements in the book business will co-operate is assured, because all, in one way or another, are dependent on publishers' profits which in turn are contingent upon the sale of big-volume books.) Third, it is hardly to be expected that drug and department store clerks are themselves interested in books, not to mention good books, and would therefore attempt to sell the latter. Even the clerks in the traditional book-store are most often merely salesmen on a commission, who have little or no idea of the nature of the wares they purvey. The same is true of the owners for whom the only distinction between books is in their rate of sale. For a comparison we may revert to the example of the German book stores which customarily employed clerks conversant not only with business organization but with books as well." In addition the book business there was (we are speaking of pre-war conditions) sufficiently stabilized so that the store need not have been concerned with the sale of dime-store novelties to ensure its further existence.

To elaborate briefly on the quick sale or no sale policy. This principle guides not only distributors but producers as well. The non-selling title, for which appellative the serious work need never strive, is not simply removed from the bookstore's racks, it is remaindered and/or pulped. The publisher cannot afford to store these books for under the present crowded conditions space has become as valuable as the objects that occupy it. Plates may even be thrown out or re-used — the latter particularly in periods when there is a shortage of metal, e.g., in time of war.

* Lehmann-Haupt, op. cit.

For that rare good book which survives this whole process a special fate is reserved — it simply gets lost. In Europe the second-hand book-trade is a highly organized institution which has flourished since time immemorial. Not so in America where virtually the entire industry is situated in a few city blocks along Fourth Avenue in Manhattan. American capitalism is distinguished, among other things, by the continuous and relentless pressure of new commodities. So that whether it is a pair of shoes that only last three months, or of women's stockings that wear for three days, or new books which enjoy a vogue for three weeks, the emphasis is always on the new, never on the durable. It is, on the one hand, a question of America's rarely producing an item that can and will last, and, on the other hand, of the system's absolute dependence for its existence upon a shoddiness of production which necessitates continual replacement, that account for this phenomenon, and, incidentally, for the insignificance of the second-hand book trade. The ordinary retail outlet will not carry such books; neither the profit to be made on them nor the demand for them warrants it — and, in any case, patrons might soil their hands touching old books. The run of the mill outlets continually emphasize newness—it being the irrationality of capitalism, and particularly of its American variety, that newness in and of itself is a positive attribute. Thus, the useful function of preserving serious literature on the market can only devolve upon the narrow shoulders of the second-hand book trade, whose inconsequentiality, in America, is its chief distinction.

The description of the quality book's cycle of life and death is completed. Most manuscripts of course, die long before they are remaindered, lost or pulped, in fact it can be categorically stated that the great majority of good literature that might be published never gets into print in the first place—is stillborn.

It has been stated by some people in and out of the book industry that even if trade publishing were to become 100 per cent best-seller purveying, this would not necessarily mean the end of serious literature in the United States because the university presses are able to fill the breach. This opinion is predicated upon the desideratum that the university press is ostensibly a non-profit organization.* However when the directors of these presses were queried as to what their greatest problem was, in the words of the interrogator: "This inquiry provoked a 100 per cent response"** — the problem, as might be imagined, was financial. Kerr quotes one director as saying: "Although the absence of profits does not bother us, we must worry about losses. A university press is in business to break even on the publication of scholarship. Most presses have the advantage of some help from their universities, but once given this help they are expected to hold their own. And they have to do it by selling, in a fiercely competitive market, a product that was never designed for a large sale. If one book loses money, another must make it up. Thus if we publish some of Professor So and So's books at a considerable loss, we should like to have a chance at one or two of the others which might bring in a little profit."

* Considering the tenuous, often illusory nature of the category profit, for the book industry in general, differentiation on this basis partakes of the mythical.

** *A Report On American University Presses*, by Chester Kerr. Association of American University Presses, 1949.

The nub of the matter is that even the break-even point in publishing involves best-sellerism. In the light of this the fact that the number of popularizations by these presses has almost doubled in twenty years (1927-1947)["] assumes large significance. That this is more than "one-man's opinion" is substantiated by William Miller's remark on the same point: "Yet more and more university presses have begun to use trade-book 'pyrotechnics' for money with which to meet current bills for 'saleless wonders'." The extent of this development is indicated in an article that Miller quotes, which was prepared by Henry M. Silver for the Spring, 1949, issue of the *American Scholar*. Silver compared the number of university press books reviewed in the *Sunday New York Times Book Review* (the bulk of the books reviewed therein are trashy) ". . . during the first six months of 1938 with the same period of 1948"; he found 33 books in the first period and 63 in the second. "In the earlier period only one press had six titles or more covered, in the latter, five. The 33 books of 1938 came from 12 presses; those of 1948 from 16."

University publishing has other dubious features. Of the 35 presses that made up the membership of the Association of American University Presses at the time the Kerr survey was conducted, 18 were under the auspices of state-sponsored institutions, and two were partly privately and partly state owned. The limitations upon freedom of inquiry and publication of state supported institutions are familiar to all. It should also be remembered: 1. That all colleges in the United States insofar as they are tax-free are state subsidized, and 2. that as these financially insolvent institutions grow increasingly dependent upon indirect federal subventions in the form of research grants to both the physical and social science departments, the area of free inquiry and publication will grow even more delimited."

There is a terrible significance in the degeneration of the book industry and this is discovered in the observation that books alone of all the mass media of communication remained, until recently, a possible outlet for genius and free expression. American newspapers and magazines have, for decades, exhibited the characteristically totalitarian monolithicism of thought, concentration of control, and artistic as well as ideational vacua, that declared their former progressive heritage, such as it was, to be forfeit. The cinema, radio and television, born into a world in retrogression, mani-

["]Ibid.

		1927	1929
1. (Books) Primarily addressed to Scholars	...	1119	1096
2. Textbooks (college and advanced)	...	471	337
3. Popularizations	...	302	521
		<hr/> 1892	<hr/> 1954

["]The world's largest publisher is, in fact, the United States Government, which issues an enormous, inchoate mass of publications, some absurd, some propagandistic, some very useful — at nominal prices, and often for nothing — except the taxpayer's money. The more useful the publication, the more dangerous the implication — for the fact that only the government can afford to put out such material indicates the weakness and superfluousness of trade publishing (which, whether or not it realizes it is already suffering from the competition afforded by the government), and makes one wonder how far off the day is when the exigencies of capitalism dictate the nationalization of the book industry.

fested from the very first, and in pure outline, the quantification and moronization which have marked their development ever since; thus they have hardly ever fought censorship, from whatever quarters it may have proceeded — rather it was always a question of which pressure to succumb to first, — nor have they developed an artistic or intellectual tradition.*

It was the very insignificance and weakness of the book industry, the fact that large aggregations of capital were neither attracted to nor absolutely necessary for it which served to cushion the business from monopolization, and left it an arena for individuality and self-expression. However the same puissant economic trend which forces the consolidation of all industry and crushes, in particular, the consumer goods trades has fastened itself on the book business at last, with disastrous results whose effects on the personnel of publishing are of significance only insofar as they signal the death of free expression in America.

* Of this the only thing that can be said is that the later the media developed the more imbecile its content. Each succeeding medium compounds and itself reproduces solely the evils of its predecessors. So while the American cinema could, in its formative period, produce at least one genius — Chaplin — radio was never able to do so, and television is so nauseating that it makes even radio appear like a haven of intellectualism.

Ralph Herman

A POSTSCRIPT TO GENOCIDE

PUBLISHED a little over a year ago, Farley Mowat's "People Of The Deer"¹ presents a striking picture of genocide in modern Canada. Rarely has a book so clearly delineated a problem, so forthrightly indicated political responsibility, so brilliantly, withal simply, suggested a solution. Mr. Mowat has, in fact, almost traversed the limits of criticism, hardly anything remains to be *said* on the subject — action alone is necessary.

Here are the bare bones of the situation as extracted from the book: In the northwest of Canada, below the Arctic Circle, an Eskimo people has almost been completely wiped out — and, it is very possible, is now totally extinct — as a result of the feral depredations of Canadian traders and the wilful negligence of the government. Numbering many hundreds of people only a few decades ago, the Ihalmiut had been reduced, in April, 1951, to less than two dozen people — including only two women capable of childbearing and hence of preserving the people as a physical entity. This catastrophe was the result of a complex of factors related by a single cause — the white man.

The Ihalmiut, and a neighbouring Indian group, the Idthen Eldeli (also close to extirpation), lived almost exclusively off the great wandering herds of deer which endlessly moved across the Barren lands of Canada. Utilizing the bow, spear, and trap these peoples had been able to eat of the deer for

¹ *People of the Deer*, by Farley Mowat. An Atlantic Monthly Press Book. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1952.

countless generations without eradicating them. While the primitive weapons were fully as efficient as those of modern man, their destructiveness was curtailed by the high degree of skill necessary to their successful employment (relatively little antecedent training is required of the would-be operator of a rifle), as well as by the fact that they could not be reloaded as easily or as quickly as the repeating rifle. When the white man brought unlimited supplies of the latter into the region the technical possibility of destruction of the food supply first became manifest. Along with the technical prerequisite the still more important *motor force* for destruction — capitalist relations — was introduced into the countryside: It became necessary to terminate the native's relative self-sufficiency in the article of food, for then and only then would he be required to trade with and hence create the possibilities of profit for the white man. To this end the Ihalmiut were bribed to forego the hunting of deer with bow and arrow and substitute for it the hunting of the white fox, whose pelts were to be exchanged for white flour, baking soda and yet more guns.

Unfortunately, the bottom fell out of the fur business several times in the last few decades, and the Ihalmiut, tied to the vagaries of capitalist economics, suffered most bitterly. Unable to trade fur for staples, the people were at the same time unqualified to hunt the deer they had forsaken, for a number of reasons: First, because they could get no cartridges from the traders for their rifles; second, because through disuse, they had lost their former skill in hunting with bows, spears, etc.; third, due to the ever-increasing decimation of the herds of deer² — deer which had been indiscriminately slaughtered by the Idthen Eldeli (to make canned pemmican for the white man), by the white traders, trappers and sportsmen.

But market fluctuation was only one of the precious boons introduced into the territory through the agency of civilization. Yet another benefice was tuberculosis. The TB rate is perhaps twenty times higher among natives than among whites — simply because the former cannot survive, subject to the rigorous climate of the Barrens, on white flour and baking soda. Only one thing can keep them healthy — the protein and fat of the deer. Without deer meat they have no resistance to the diseases of civilization, and it is precisely deer meat which is denied them. As a result of these and other factors, what the most unrestrained and violently elemental forces of nature had never been able to accomplish — the expungement of the flame of life from this by turns glaciated and calefacted expanse — has almost become a *fait accompli* in the few years since the Kablunait first penetrated the area.

Though the Canadian government has many reports filed away on this matter it has done nothing except very occasionally throw a sop to the starvelings. Yet Canada boasts that it is "one of the world's great

² However strange it may appear, it is nevertheless true that the phenomenon of animal genocide is fully as serious (quite aside from the question of the suffering inflicted by man upon nature) as that of human genocide — because they are in reality one and the same problem. As capitalism progressively destroys the natural flora and fauna it also destroys not only itself, but all possibilities for life as well. In the plains, mountains, and surround-seas of modern Canada not only are the great arctic herds of deer now close to doom, but the musk oxen, narwhales, right whales, seals, walrus, etc. also face a similar fate — and hard by their elimination may follow the death of the cultures and people dependent upon them.

democracies" and an adherent to the Genocide Convention. Now and again its statesmen are even heard to fulminate — and rightfully so — on the practice of genocide in the slave empire that is Russia.

Mr. Mowat makes several very practical proposals (some already tried and proven) for relieving the desperate situation of the Ihalmuit and Idthen Eldeli in particular and of the 18,000 Indians and Eskimos of the Canadian Arctic and high-forest areas generally. They are inexpensive, easy to apply, would hurt no one and yet save innumerable lives: 1. Place an absolute prohibition on the killing of deer in the Barrens. 2. Import European reindeer to replenish the failing stock of caribou in the region. 3. Let each village of Eskimos have its own herd of reindeer, for which its people might act as herdsmen. 4. Let the people sell the surplus reindeer meat on the market — to the protein-hungry populations of the world.

Prior to the implementation of these proposals relief supplies of food should of course be rushed to the famine stricken regions by air.

Such things can be done almost immediately to aid the natives. If the Canadian government does not implement these proposals it will bear direct responsibility for the extermination of segments of the native population of Canada.

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST CONSCRIPTION IN BRITAIN

In the last number of *Contemporary Issues* we reported that we joined the anti-conscription campaign then being conducted by the No Conscription-Council, and asked our readers to do the same. Our participation in the campaign proved abortive. The tedious work of collecting signatures did not result, as we originally thought, in their being presented as a petition to Parliament, but simply in their ending up in the waste-paper basket of the local M.P. Experience has taught us that this campaign followed the pattern of innumerable other useless campaigns in which the enthusiasm and devotion of many sincere opponents of the *status quo* are harnessed by irresponsible sponsors in such a way that the aim is by necessity defeated, the opponent disillusioned and the defender of the *status quo* strengthened.

This process of leading popular resistance into blind alleys shows itself most sharply in the manœuvring of Stalinist or Stalinist-front organizations, but is the typical behaviour also of most other political groups to-day, which are through and through bureaucratic, and despite all covering and trappings, interested really in maintaining the *status quo*.

We naturally were aware of the dangers of bureaucratic wangling from the outset. But it is our practice to take everybody at his word, and we are prepared to co-operate with individuals and organizations, if they are on the right track, disregarding past history and ideologies (this automatically

excludes the Communist Party and organisations under its control which are never on the right track).

As far as the anti-conscription campaign is concerned, we erred in supporting it unconditionally. We should instead have criticized the unhappy way it was conducted and suggested better methods.

Publishing the article of Read-Collins in the same number of the magazine, we declared that "with this indictment of conscription and the main tenor of his article we are in substantial agreement". We should have qualified that statement by adding that we agree with him as we agree with every individual, catholic, stalinist, or even Eisenhower himself, — if he speaks the truth. Further we should have added that the best arguments against the misdeeds of the "West" lose all force if the slightest excuse is made for the incomparably worse crimes of the "East". Read-Collins, though he offers no direct excuse for stalinism, obviously has illusions about it. We should be pleased if a discussion with us would help him to get rid of these dangerous illusions.

Politics is no easy matter. Self-appointed leaders are always right. We consider ourselves as part of the public and share their privilege of making mistakes. Public accounting for our mistakes is a matter of course.

January 17th, 1954.

MATERIAL AND DOCUMENTS

WE WILL NOT MOVE*

The clamour which began in 1951 for the re-zoning of Western Native Areas and the removal of the so-called "black spots" no longer hangs over our heads as an ugly threat only. The Dictator of Native Affairs, Dr. Verwoerd, has recently declared the project to be a cut and dried Government "scheme". The period of "debate", always allowed to "opposition" and "dissident" elements in our minority society, so that they may kick their heels in pseudo protest and confuse every issue, is finally over. Members of the United Party both in the House and on the city Council have — naturally, as always, — "bowed to the inevitable". In this planned outcome the vast mass of our people in the affected areas must recognize their existing "leaders", of the A.N.C. and S.A.I.C.,** the anonymous Communist Party brethren, and the free-lance liberals and humanitarians,

* This leaflet was issued by the Movement for a Democracy of Content in Johannesburg, South Africa; and a public meeting was held at Sophiatown (an African township), a report on which is planned for a future number of *Contemporary Issues*. For readers not familiar with South Africa, we add that the localities mentioned in the leaflet are African townships (in South African parlance "native locations") round Johannesburg which with neighbouring towns to a distance of some thirty miles to the East and West forms the chief mining and industrial area of South Africa.

** Respectively the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress.

as nothing more than a politically unenlightened and bankrupt bunch, part and parcel of the official method of ruling through deception : For all along they have kept up the bluff of "discussion", "consultation" and "negotiation". In advocating such policies they have not only not achieved anything for us but, by spreading political illusions, they have postponed and disorganized our resistance to removal.

Its confidence bolstered up, the Government can now propose, in all seriousness, the physical removal of the townships of Sophiatown, Mardale, Newclare and the "Native"-occupied portions of Vrededorp and Pageville. It is also intended to incorporate Alexandra Township into the scheme. Into these areas will move the great "discoverers of Africa". The proposed uprooting will involve a terrible dislocation. In Western Native Areas no less than 80,000 people, of whom over 66,000 are Africans, are to be evicted from their homes which are within easy distance of their jobs. The same ruinous, brutal and inexcusable upheaval is planned throughout the whole of the country.

What has brought this new deluge of "apartheid" upon the heads of the non-European people? The propaganda in the press would have us believe that the scheme is in the best possible interests of everybody. First, in order of priority, are, of course, the Whites. "Black spot" elimination would be for them something delectable, salve to pent-up prejudices, and a sop to "racial harmony". The White minority stands, naturally, exposed in this: as the vast majority of Africans in Africa have never ever demanded segregation and care nothing about it. But is this "black spot" purity the real motive underlying the residential reshuffling? The contradictory behaviour of the Government and its staunch hangers-on gives the lie to this most vociferously advertised reason for a "good service". Numerous other "black spots", such as Western Native Township, the Wemmer Barracks, the Wolhuter and Denver Hostels, the Salisbury Compounds, etc., are happily accommodated, without comment, in the so-called European areas.

Nor can the other much-advertised claim for the removals be taken with any greater seriousness. Again and again it has been emphasized that it is in the interests, as "slum clearance", of the overcrowded people. There is no doubt that all these areas are slums. The "helplessness", or should we say unwillingness, of our "rulers" to supply proper housing is undoubtedly a notorious and disgraceful fact. Even their so-called "model" housing schemes are inhuman in every respect. But in reaction to their own failure, for which they alone and not the people are responsible, why are they intent on singling out for "slum clearance" Townships in the Western Native Areas? Were slum clearance the real intention, any moron (always excepting Government officials) would expect them to begin with areas that are very much worse in this uninterrupted slum that is Africa to-day. Is the proper housing and "slum clearance" intention to be eased or aggravated by evicting from their place of residence a further 20,000 families?

What then is the real motive behind the move? We must understand that our "rulers" operate against a background of an ever-increasing shortage of cheap, docile and controlled labour — having scandalously squandered "their" African labour already for hundreds of years. To-day, the Gold Mining industry alone, that darling death-trap, but highly profit-

able concern of South Africa, is, to quote Sir George Albu (*Sunday Times*, 10/5/53), "working on about 70 per cent of its Native labour needs". The chronic shortage of seasonal labour for White agriculture is the subject of hysterical outcries and protests in the national press, despite the private gaols set up with the approval of the Government. Against this background the removal scheme must be recognized as a vicious, large-scale attempt to create conditions favourable for the increase of cheap labour. The Townships that come under the axe stand in contradiction to this insatiable need. They are relatively "free" or "open" areas where labour is more mobile than elsewhere — more free than elsewhere to bargain and to sell itself to the highest bidder on the labour market. These Townships must, therefore, at Meadowlands, Diepkloof and in other places, be transformed into the closed, "compound" type of township under more direct control of "authority". What is involved is a far greater and stricter totalitarian command over the disposal of the life and limb of every man, woman and child.

Control is naturally easier where the removed are concentrated in conditions of destitution and hopelessness. These factors are ancillary or facilitating to the main plan of directing labour, but they are, none the less, also planned features of the removals and relied upon by our slave masters. The greater distance of the new areas will confront our people with the impossibility of travel to the city. Already the railway to Orlando and Pimville is not only hopelessly, but dangerously, congested. To this feature driving to employment away from the city to the farms and mines must be added the stabilizing of the mass misery of our people at a very low level. Tens of thousands are to be ejected into the veld. The drastic lowering of living standards all round will enforce recourse to the worst jobs which will be economically "practicable" on the new low level. Anybody who doubts these elements, planned to augment the more onerous drive toward cheap labour, has only to look at the facts. In the protracted deliberations for the "scheme" no provision has been made for any increase of railway facilities or for housing in the new areas. In all only a small piece of land has so far been acquired for the envisaged displacement. In Meadowlands a total of 724 stands and in Diepkloof 250 morgen. This will naturally have to be added to, but the Government's grandiloquent claim that their arrangements are only a pioneer venture to be increased over the 5—10 year period until an "ideal" is reached, is nothing more than cynical eyewash. We are well aware, to our human cost, that "their" policies toward us are nothing more than an insulting arithmetic of broken promises. In the municipal area, at the moment, live nearly 80,000 people in squalor conditions at the Orlando "shelters" and shanty towns of Moroka and Jabavu, who are still awaiting the fulfilment of a promise made seven years ago that they would be moved to proper accommodation within five years from 1946. We must not be bluffed. The Government is intent in the Group Areas scheme on driving our facilities and standard of living down to a level where we will become nothing more than a reservoir of destitute and willing labour.

The same effort to swell the reservoir is afoot throughout the whole of the continent of Africa. The "Rehabilitation" scheme in the Reserves to comb the people from the land for directed employment elsewhere, the one-

sided civil war against the Kikuyu in Kenya to drive them into further enslavement, the Federation scheme to mobilize through "union" the manpower of Central Africa, etc., etc. These are all desperate bids toward a total plan for the re-colonization of Africa along *modern* lines. The model for forced labour through the "resettlement" of peoples is the totalitarianism of Russia and Hitler's Germany. Our struggle against re-zoning, in its deepest effects, is by no means a parochial or isolated struggle. We must go into it in the firm knowledge that we are contributing our forces against White Rule of the whole of Africa along "their" intended modern fascist lines (in which the "old" colonial rule will be, by comparison, a small hell) and are opposing to this our perspective of the *whole* of Africa for the Africans, for self-determination and freedom.

Clearly our struggle in the Western Areas, as in the whole of Africa, must be along the path of non-collaboration with our oppressors. We will not confer, deliberate or bargain with *any* member of minority Government in this country, nor with the quisling leaders or organizations who advocate "consultation". The whole tender concern of these "leaders" for collaboration is for driving a better economic bargain with the Government for the small handful of property-holders in the areas threatened. Dr. Xuma, on behalf of the Anti-Expropriation and Proper Housing Committee, has succinctly presented the whole business of the present "leaders" when he stated in *Drum* (March, 1953) that the "African property owners" are the people "most concerned". What about the tens of thousands of tenants who also wish to retain a roof over their heads? Is the struggle to be sold to obtain a better financial deal for a tiny section of landlords? They are also being victimized, but we must make it clear to the property-holders that they can alone help themselves by helping our whole community in its unconditional opposition to removal — or else we will oppose them.

The resistance movement can only be built up and properly pioneered by refusing to take into "conference" or "consultation" White Government which is the source of our ruin, intent only on oppressing us. In our desperate situation we acknowledge only the authority of our own people over our own affairs. On the basis of this firm political recognition we must build up an uncompromising and independent struggle determined, on the smallest and gravest occasions, to boycott in practice the Group Areas scheme entirely. THE PRINCIPLE FOR OUR POLITICAL STRUGGLE IS NON-COLLABORATION AND THE WEAPON IS BOYCOTT.

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